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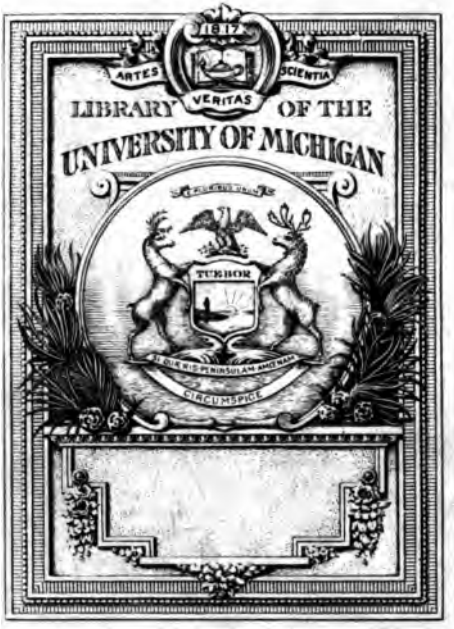
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ESSAYS,

&c. &c. &c.

ESSAYS

ON THE FOLLOWING

INTERESTING SUBJECTS:

viz.

I. GOVERNMENT.
II. REVOLUTIONS.
III. THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION.
IV. KINGLY GOVERNMENT.
V. PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION & REFORM.
VI. LIBERTY AND EQUALITY.
VII. TAXATION.

AND,

VIII. THE PRESENT WAR, & THE STAGNATION OF CREDIT AS CONNECTED WITH IT.

BY JOHN YOUNG,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT HAWICK.

EDINBURGH:
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INTRODUCTION.

IT is long ſince the inhabitants of Britain have been termed a nation of politicians. And it is one privilege, by which we are diſtinguiſhed from moſt other nations on the face of the earth, that on political, as well as other ſubjects, every man is allowed to think for himſelf, to expreſs, and even to publiſh his thoughts, without fear of danger; ſo long as he propagates no opinions ſubverſive of public order and peace. But never were the minds of men ſo intent upon political ſubjects, nor ſo many pens employed in political diſcuſſions, as ſince the year 1789. The ſurpriſing revolution that then took place in France, together with certain publications, which then made their appearance in Britain, raiſed ſuch a fermentation in the minds of men, more eſpecially in the lower ranks of life, as perhaps no former period ever witneſſed. Various circumſtances have occurred ſince that time, which have ſerved to keep up that fermentation. And, though people now find it convenient to be a little more guarded, both in their expreſſions and in their conduct, than they once were, the ſame political enthuſiaſm ſtill occupies their minds; it is ready to burſt forth with redoubled violence, whenever an occaſion ſhall offer:—And who knows what occaſion of that kind theſe critical times may produce? It is, therefore, the part of every good citizen, and of every true Chriſ-

 tian,

tian, to contribute his endeavour to ſtem the torrent, or to prevent it from taking ſuch a direction as may overwhelm all in confuſion and ruin.

It may be thought foreign to the buſineſs of a miniſter of the Goſpel to intermeddle in political diſputes; and, if theſe diſputes are viewed in a light merely political, there may be ſome juſtice in the thought. But every political opinion muſt either be agreeable or diſagreeable to the word of God: every political duty is enforced by the authority of God in his law: and every political crime is an act of moral depravity. Goſpel miniſters ought to lay before their people whatever they have received of the Lord: to inculcate every duty that God requires of them; and faithfully to warn them againſt every ſin that He has prohibited. If, through their neglect, the people under their charge ſhall fall into ſinful courſes,—the people may periſh in their iniquity; but their blood muſt be required at the watchmen's hands. Upon this principle, the writer of theſe pages holds himſelf fully juſtified in laying them before the world; more eſpecially when he takes into conſideration the following things.

He does not conſider the pulpit as a proper place for either a full or a frequent diſcuſſion of political ſubjects. However important thoſe duties are which we owe to one another, as members of ſociety on earth,—the doctrines of the croſs of Chriſt, and the concerns of an eternal world, are of more importance ſtill. And upon theſe chiefly he thinks it his duty to inſiſt on the Lord's Day. Much leſs does he think it proper to follow their example who make public prayer a vehicle for conveying their political ſentiments to their hearers. As he conſiders himſelf, when preaching the Goſpel, as the meſſenger of God to men; and therefore would

make

make conſcience of delivering that, and that only, which he has in commiſſion from God:—ſo, in public prayer, he conſiders himſelf as the mouth of the congregation to God; and, therefore, dare expreſs nothing to which he has not reaſon to think that the whole congregation will ſay—*Amen.* His views of the preſent ſtate of public affairs are pretty well known, both to his own congregation, and to others about the place where he reſides: but the grounds upon which theſe views are built, he has never had an opportunity fairly to ſtate: and this he now does the more willingly, in hopes that it may be uſeful, not only to his own congregation, but alſo to the public at large.

He has the honour to belong to a body of Diſſenters who have always diſtinguiſhed themſelves by ſtrenuous contendings in behalf of Chriſtian liberty and the rights of the people, as members of the church of Chriſt: and, he is apprehenſive that ſome may conſider the whole ſociety as equally ſtrenuous in behalf of what ſome now call the political rights of man; while he is convinced that theſe two ſorts of rights have no connection with, or relation to one another. He has ſeen, with deep concern, that, by the active part which ſome diſſenters, both in England and Scotland, have taken in the preſent diſputes,—an odium has been brought upon the diſſenting intereſt, in the eyes of government and its adherents, which will not be eaſily wiped off. By this means, he is afraid, a very ſtrong bar is placed in the way of the Legiſlature's granting that indulgence to Proteſtant diſſenters, which they ſeem diſpoſed to extend to every other denomination of men. And he knows, that though the principles of the Seceſſion church, with relation to the civil government in this nation, have been fully laid before the world fifty years ago; and though Seceders

have

ESSAY I.

Of GOVERNMENT in general; and the Subjection which Chriſtians owe to the Powers that be.

AMONG the philoſophers of modern times, it has become faſhionable to ſpeak of mankind as having originally been a race of ſavages, little removed from brutes, and wholly unconnected with one another in ſociety. And this ſavage ſtate they call the ſtate of nature. In ſuch a ſtate, every man muſt have united in his own perſon all the rights that are now poſſeſſed both by magiſtrates and ſubjects, as far as related to himſelf. Reſtrained by no human laws, he had a right to do what he pleaſed, without being ſubject to the will of another, or being accountable for what he did to any creature. Every man muſt have been his own lawgiver, his own judge, his own protector, and his own avenger.

But, though for argument's ſake, we may ſuppoſe ſuch a ſtate to have exiſted, and though, in ſome places of the world, mankind have ſo far degenerated, as to have made near approaches to that ſtate; yet it is plain, from the nature of things, that, in ſuch a ſtate, man nev-

er could ſubſiſt. The ſocial principle is as much interwoven with our nature, as the principle of ſelf-preſervation: ſo that no human creature could ever ſubſiſt one day, in the exerciſe of his rational faculties, without deſiring ſociety, and uſing means to obtain it, if ſuch means were in his power. The law of nature, that was originally written on man's heart, and ſtill continues to be ſo in ſome degree, expreſly requires ſocial and relative duties; and as expreſly prohibits crimes againſt ſociety: and, therefore, neceſſarily preſuppoſes a ſocial ſtate.—Beſides, unleſs we ſuppoſe all mankind perfectly free from any vicious diſpoſition, the ſpecies could not long have ſubſiſted, in that unſocial ſtate. The weak would have become a prey to the ſtrong; and the meek and peaceable—to the turbulent and unruly. Either they who were diſpoſed to live in peace, muſt have aſſociated together for their mutual defence; or the ſtrongeſt individual, and the moſt wicked, would have made himſelf maſter of the whole race. In either of theſe caſes, the foundation would have been laid, of ſome kind of ſociety.

If we have recourſe to Scripture hiſtory, the only hiſtory that can give us ſatisfaction in that matter, we ſhall find the above reaſoning confirmed by fact. Adam, though in full poſſeſſion of a furniſhed world, the very day that he was created, felt a want of ſomething more adapted to his nature, than any thing that God had yet made. Neither did he find a help meet for him, till he was provided with a companion of his own ſpecies. Society, therefore, was formed, as ſoon as Eve was created: and from that day to this, men have always ſubſiſted in ſociety. Whether ſociety could have ſubſiſted without ſubordination, or not,—if man had continued in a ſtate of original integrity? is a queſtion that none can anſwer.

But

But we are very ſure that it cannot in our preſent corrupt ſtate. Accordingly, as ſoon as ſin entered, God put the woman under ſubjection to the man; when He ſaid, "Unto him ſhall be thy deſire, and he ſhall rule over "thee *." A ſimilar expreſſion uſed to Cain, intimates a kind of natural ſubjection of the younger to the elder, even among brothers. And thus there can be no ſociety without ſubordination, and ſome kind of government.

What ſort of government obtained among mankind in the antediluvian ages, or from the flood to the building of Babel, it is impoſſible to determine. It is plain, that during the laſt mentioned period, mankind continued united in one ſociety; and dwelt together in one part of the earth. After the confuſion of languages, they who ſpoke with the ſame tongue would naturally aſſociate together, ſettle in ſome convenient ſpot of the earth, and ſet up among themſelves that form of government, which their peculiar circumſtances might point out. But we have no reaſon to think, that the ſame form was adopted every where.

Some have aſſerted that the firſt form of government was patriarchal: that every man exerciſed a ſovereign authority in his own family: that when the father of a family died, his authority, together with his inheritance, deſcended to his eldeſt ſon. The ſon's heir ſucceeded, and ſo forward, till the family grew into a nation, and the family chieftain roſe into a king. Hence, they plead for monarchy, as more congenial to nature than any other ſort of government.

Others plead that the patriarchs were no kings; that they exerciſed no other authority than what ſtill belongs

* Gen. iii. 16.

belongs to every head of a family: that this authority did not deſcend to their heirs; but that each of their ſons, when they came to have families of their own, exerciſed the ſame authority in them as his father had done in his. They ſay that the firſt king was *Nimrod*, an uſurper and a tyrant: that all other kingdoms were ſet up in the ſame manner. Therefore royalty is repugnant to nature: and that both name and thing ought to be baniſhed from among men.

Both theſe opinions have ſomething true in them, and ſomething falſe. On the one hand, it cannot be denied that the patriarchs exerciſed a more extenſive authority in their own houſes, than any head of a family would be allowed to do under a ſettled government. *Abram* had his trained ſervants, whom he led forth to war: he formed alliances with neighbouring princes of patriarchs; for *Aner*, *Eſhcol*, and *Mamre* were confederate with *Abram*: he paſt ſentence of baniſhment againſt Hagar and her ſon: and exerciſed other functions of royalty, even while he ſojourned in a ſtrange land. The ſame thing is apparent in the hiſtory of the other patriarchs.—On the other hand, we have no evidence that this authority deſcended to the eldeſt ſon. Neither *Reuben*, who was *Jacob*'s firſt-born,—nor *Joſeph*, to whom he left the birthright,—nor *Judah*, the father of the royal line,—claimed any authority over their brethren after their father's death. But *Judah*, even in his father's lifetime, exerciſed the higheſt authority in his own family; for he paſt ſentence of death upon *Tamar* his daughter-in-law.

But, as ſoon as birthright, and a regular ſucceſſion to property, were known,—it is very natural to ſuppoſe, that the man who ſucceeded to his father's eſtate would conſider himſelf as ſucceeding alſo to his authority. Nor

is it improbable that his claim might be ſuſtained by the reſt of the family. If it was ſo in one generation, it might be ſo in another: and thus the ſucceſſion of kingdoms, as well as of eſtates, might become hereditary. We have, among ourſelves, an inconteſtible proof that this was the caſe in fact. All the world knows, that, till the paſſing of the Juriſdiction Act, an almoſt deſpotic authority was exerciſed, by the chiefs of our clans, over all that were conſidered to be of the ſame blood: and no ſooner did a man ſucceed to the paternal eſtate, than his authority was chearfully ſubmitted to by the whole tribe. Even to this day, neither the progreſs of knowledge, nor the force of poſitive law, has been able totally to aboliſh this authority. If this was the caſe in Scotland, why might it not be ſo in other places? Whether this ſyſtem is agreeable to reaſon or ſound philoſophy, or not, we ſhall not diſpute: but, as it is founded in natural affection, it is ſurely conſonant to human affairs. And, in fact, this ſeems to have been the manner in which moſt governments were formed in the ruder ages of ſociety.

Of all human paſſions, none is more inſatiable than—ambition. And, therefore, it cannot be thought improbable,—that a man under the influence of that paſſion, though he had no hereditary claim to dominion, when he found it in his power to ſubdue his neighbours, would embrace the opportunity of raiſing himſelf; and would extend his conqueſts as far as he could. Though Nimrod is the firſt on record who made himſelf a king in this manner, he was far from being the laſt. Even in modern times, *Oliver Cromwel*, *Kouli Khan*, *Hyder Ali*, and others, have riſen from the lower ranks of life, and made themſelves maſters of powerful empires; without waiting, either, for the choice or the conſent of the nations whom

whom they were to govern. The juſtice of ſuch men's claims—few will aſſert. But it cannot be denied that ſuch is the origin of many governments now ſubſiſting; as well as many that have ſubſiſted in former times.

Neither is there any doubt, that, when a number of people were, in the courſe of Providence, ſettled together, in a place where they were previouſly ſubject to no government, they would ſet up among themſelves what form of government they thought moſt likely to promote the happineſs of ſociety. The ſame thing would happen when the former government had, by any means, been diſſolved; or when a people, whether juſtly or unjuſtly, had ſhaken off their ſubjection to their former rulers. In this manner was the government of the United Provinces erected; and, more lately, that of the American States. —But we have no reaſon to think that in all ſuch caſes the ſame form of government was fixed upon. Some nations, like the people of Iſrael, choſe to have a king; and *monarchy* was eſtabliſhed among them. Others, putting confidence in a few, who were conſidered as the moſt eminent for wiſdom and virtue, entruſted the government in their hands; and *ariſtocracy* was the reſult. In other places, the people choſe to retain the power in their own hands; and ſo formed a *democracy*, or republican government.—In different nations there have been different modifications of all theſe three; and different mixtures of two or more of them.

Indeed there are manifeſt traces of all theſe three in the earlieſt periods of hiſtory. Even in the days of Abraham there were kings in Egypt, in Aſſyria, in Perſia, and in Canaan: ſome of them ruling over extenſive empires, and ſome governing one city only. Of ariſtocracy we have inſtances in the Midianites, who, though

but

but one tribe, were governed by five kings*: and the Philiſtines, whoſe five lords once had the adminiſtration in their hands conjunctly; though afterwards one of them obtained a pre-eminence, and became their king †. And of republican government we have an inſtance in the Hittites, or children of Heth; as appears from this, that, before Abraham could have a burial place among them, it was neceſſary to hold an aſſembly of all that went in at the gates of the city; and the purchaſe of the field and cave of *Ephron* was tranſacted in their preſence ‡. Among the Gibeonites alſo the government ſeems to have been democratical; for, though they had elders, we hear nothing of their king: and all the inhabitants of their country acted, in conjunction with their elders, in ſending the ambaſſadors to Joſhua §.

In this enlightened age, few will call in queſtion the truth of that important maxim, that *all power and authority are radically in the people.* I hope few will ever diſpute it in time to come. Every people or nation has an undoubted right to chooſe and elect what form of government they find moſt convenient; and to truſt the adminiſtration of it in what hands they pleaſe: and in this right every individual has his ſhare. But from this maxim, if not rightly underſtood, we may draw concluſions which the premiſſes will not bear;—concluſions which neither conſiſt with truth, nor with the peace and well-being of ſociety. A few of them may be pointed out.

1. It

* Numb. xxxi. 8.

† Judg. xvi. 1 Sam. v. 11. Compare ch. xxvii. 3.

‡ Gen. xxiii. 10.

§ Joſh. ix. 11.

1. It does not hence follow, that all governments have actually been ſet up by the general voice of the people, or even with their univerſal conſent. Though, in point of theory, the people's right cannot be denied; yet it is plain from what has been ſaid, that, in fact, this right has ſeldom been exerciſed, or even claimed, in the erection of any government. In moſt nations of the world, the people never to this day dreamed that they had ſuch a right; and how ſhould they exerciſe it? Even where it has been exerciſed, it cannot be ſuppoſed that a whole nation was ever unanimous in their choice. Some individuals would always have preferred a different form of government, or would rather have employed other hands in the adminiſtration of it. But it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe that this minority, becauſe they did not actively concur in erecting the government, ſhould enjoy the benefit of its protection, without being obliged to ſubmit to its authority, or to contribute to its ſupport.

2. It does not follow, that it is moſt for the benefit of ſociety that the people ſhould retain the exerciſe of that power, or any conſiderable part of it, in their own hands. To govern a great nation muſt require talents, education, and experience, beyond what uſually falls to the lot of thoſe in the lower ranks of life, in the moſt enlightened nation of the world. Common people may ſpeculate about affairs of ſtate at their fire ſides; but the weight of government is too heavy for their ſhoulders. Were our beſt country politician placed at the helm of public affairs, he would ſoon find himſelf unequal to the taſk. Neither would this be remedied by employing a great number of ſuch perſons in the buſineſs: as the diverſity of their opinions would add to the confuſion and embarraſsment. A man muſt ſerve an apprenticeſhip

apprenticeſhip before he be qualified for any mechanical employment; and how ſhall one be qualified to govern nations without any inſtruction in the art? Is the ſcience of politics more ſimple, or more eaſily acquired than an ordinary handycraft? Or is it eaſier to manage affairs of ſtate than to make a pair of ſhoes? Every man, ſurely, has a right to chooſe his own ſhoemaker; but will that man act wiſely who ſhall employ one for that purpoſe who never knew how to *briſtle a thread?* Yea, every man has a right, if he pleaſes, to make his own ſhoes; but are the rights of man violated by his wearing ſhoes of another man's making?——In like manner, though all power belongs radically to the people, their right is not violated by committing the actual exerciſe of their power into the hands of a few: and the ſooner the body of the people diveſt themſelves of that power, if it is entruſted in proper hands, the better.

3. It does not follow from this maxim, that after a particular form of government has been ſet up, and continued for ages, with the conſent of the body of the people,—the people have a right to aboliſh it, and ſet up another, as often as they pleaſe. It has been pleaded by the friends of liberty, and no true friend of liberty will deny it, that all government is founded upon a mutual compact between rulers and people: and that ſuch a compact, either expreſs or implicit, ſubſiſts wherever there is a lawful government. Now, it is plain to every rational underſtanding, that neither party has a right to break or diſſolve any contract, without the conſent of the other. Hence, it has been argued with juſtice, that when kings or other rulers violate that original compact, they forfeit their right to govern; the people may diſplace, and even puniſh them The body of this nation, acting upon this principle, once declared, that

their

their king had forfeited his crown, and the throne had become vacant. And this declaration is a ſtanding law of our country. But, may it not be argued, with equal juſtice, that, if the people, or any part of them, violate the compact on their part, and refuſe to fulfil their ſtipulations to government;—then government has a right to conſider them as having forfeited its protection, and to puniſh them as rebels? Unleſs this doctrine is admitted, and reduced to practice, there can never be ſtrength or ſtability in any government.

We ſhall be told that "rulers were made for the "people, and not the people for them: that they are "but ſervants of the public; and that every man has a "right to diſmiſs his ſervants when he pleaſes."—True: magiſtrates are ſervants of the ſtate, or, if you pleaſe, of the people; and were made rulers for the people's good. But, as the people are not ſlaves to their rulers, ſo neither are rulers ſlaves to the people. They ſerve by contract: and ſurely they may be allowed the rights of a common hired ſervant. If a ſervant breaks his contract, and refuſes to do his maſter's work according to paction, his maſter may doubtleſs turn him away: but, if he ſerves faithfully and honeſtly, according to bargain, the maſter who turns him away will find himſelf obliged, both in law and equity, to give him his wages and maintenance for the time ſtipulated; beſides damages for breach of contract.

Our new philoſophers likewiſe tell us, that "it is "abſurd for one generation to chooſe a form of govern-"ment for another, or for any generation to make laws "for poſterity: and therefore no ſucceeding generation "is bound to adhere to that government which their "fathers ſet up; nor to ſubmit to any rulers whom "themſelves have not choſen." But if this doctrine is

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once admitted, there is an end of all government, of all commerce, and of all ſociety, civil and religious. Does not every man bind his heirs, executors, and ſucceſſors, as well as himſelf, in every civil contract? And what confuſion would enſue, if heirs and executors ſhould refuſe to fulfil ſuch engagements? Parents, at the baptiſm of their children, lay their children as well as themſelves under ſolemn engagements to God, and to the church; and what muſt be the conſequence to religion, and to religious ſociety, if theſe engagements are not allowed to be binding? Have not public bodies the ſame right to bind poſterity by their contracts as private perſons have? Indeed they have an additional right to do it; becauſe public bodies never die; but continue the ſame, when all the individuals who compoſed them are changed. This is acknowledged by all mankind to be the caſe with every paltry corporation; and who can deny that it is ſo with nations too? If any of the Friends of the People were poſſeſſed of a note for a thouſand pounds, emitted by the bank of England a hundred years ago, and ſhould apply to have it paid; would he be pleaſed if the directors, acting upon his own principles, ſhould tell him, that they never emitted that note, that their predeceſſors in office had no power to bind them by engagements entered into before they were born, and therefore he ſhould have nothing? Have not all nations, ſince the beginning of the world, conſidered their treaties with other nations as binding upon poſterity, as well as upon that generation in which they were made? Yea, did not God himſelf puniſh the people of Iſrael for breaking a treaty in the days of Saul that had been entered into by Joſhua four hundred years before? And why ſhould thoſe contracts be of leſs force, that are entered into by the different parts of a

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nation with one another? Is not George III. conſidered, even by the Friends of the People, as bound by *Magna Charta*, though granted in the reign of King John? And why ſhould not the people of England be as ſtrictly bound by their engagements to the Crown, ſuppoſing them to be of as old a date?

If men could not chooſe a form of government, or make laws for poſterity; then not only the laws, but the very conſtitution of every nation, behoved to be changed every day. Every day almoſt a thouſand perſons die in Britain; an equal number are born; and ſome hundreds, at leaſt, come of age. He that comes of age to-day, may ſay:—"I never conſented to the form of government "now ſubſiſting: I never had any voice in the choice "of the ruling powers, or in the making of any laws. "I will therefore be ſubject to no laws till I myſelf have "part in the making of them: nor will I ſubmit to any "government, till I, in conjunction with my cotempo-"raries, have framed a conſtitution for ourſelves."—He that comes of age to-morrow may argue in the ſame manner; and inſiſt for a general convention, in which he ſhall have a voice, by himſelf or his repreſentative, before he will ſubmit to any government or any law whatſoever. Surely then we ſhall have conventions and conſtitutions in great abundance!

Of all others, this argument comes with the worſt grace from Seceders; and I am truly ſorry ever to have heard it from any of their mouths. We conſider ourſelves, and the whole nation, as bound by the ſolemn vows that our anceſtors came under to God in the National Covenant, and in the Solemn League. We conſider it as our duty to mourn for the breach of thoſe engagements, and to teſtify againſt it, as one of the moſt heinous of our national ſins. But if our anceſtors had

no right to bind us by contracts or covenants with men, what right could they have to bind us by ſuch engagements to God? Beſides, I would beg my brethren's attention to this;—that, by theſe ſolemn covenants, we are as ſtrictly bound to ſubmit to the laws of our country, to adhere to its conſtitution,—and even to defend, with our lives and fortunes, the perſon and authority of its chief magiſtrate, in the execution of theſe laws,—— as we are to any other moral duty. The expreſs words of the Solemn League and Covenant, Art. iii. are theſe: —"We ſhall, with ſincerity, reality, and conſtancy,— "endeavour, with our eſtates and lives, to preſerve the "rights and privileges of the Parliaments, and the li- "berties of the kingdoms; and to preſerve and defend "the King's Majeſty's perſon and government, in the "preſervation and defence of the true religion and li- "berties of the kingdoms;—that the world may bear "witneſs, with our conſciences, of our loyalty; and "that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminiſh "his Majeſty's juſt power and greatneſs."—If theſe engagements, come under by our anceſtors in the days of Charles I. are binding upon us; how can we be otherwiſe than bound to defend, with our eſtates and lives, the rights and privileges of the Britiſh parliament, the liberties of the united kingdom, and the perſon and authority of our ſovereign George III.?—How far our words and actions correſpond to this obligation, God and our own conſciences will one day determine.

Neither Scripture nor reaſon give an excluſive ſanction to any particular form of government. Owing to the differences of national character, of ſituation, and purſuits, one kind of government may be proper among one people; and a different conſtitution may be better adapted to the circumſtances of another. Thus, a mix-

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ed government has been found moſt congenial to the people of Britain: perhaps a republican government is more adapted to the circumſtances of our brethren in America: and, from recent events, it may be ſuſpected, that, hard as their ſituation was, while the king's will was their law, monarchy is the only government ſuited to the conſtitutional levity and ferocity of our neighbours in France. There have been inſtances of nations flouriſhing and happy under different forms of government. And every government is capable of degenerating into tyranny, oppreſſion or anarchy, in the hands of a corrupt adminiſtration. Hence there is a great deal of truth in Mr. Pope's maxim,—

"That which is beſt adminiſter'd is beſt."

There was once a nation whoſe form of government was preſcribed by God himſelf. He not only moulded their political conſtitution; but gave them a body of municipal laws, which none had power to aboliſh or to alter: for JEHOVAH their God was their king. That law expired with the civil ſtate of the Jews; and was never conſidered by Chriſtians as binding upon any other nation, or in any other place but the land of Iſrael. But many of thoſe laws might with propriety be adopted in every nation. And it is carefully to be obſerved, that there could be nothing in their conſtitution or code of laws inconſiſtent with moral equity or with any of the juſt rights of man; becauſe the Great Judge of all the earth muſt neceſſarily do right.——It may be pleaded that many of theſe laws were typical; intended to point out good things to come:—and this is readily granted. But neither with this, nor with any other deſign, can it be ſuppoſed, that He, who is the original fountain of all reaſon, of all right, and of all juſtice,—would ever eſtabliſh tyranny, oppreſſion, or iniquity, by a law. And therefore, nothing,

thing that, by divine appointment, belonged to that conſtitution, can be inconſiſtent with the rights of the people, when adopted by any other nation.

But what is of the greateſt importance to Chriſtians is, that the Scriptures every where enjoin obedience and ſubmiſſion to that government under which it is our lot to live; whatever it is, or in what manner ſoever it was ſet up. And, accordingly, Chriſtians, in all ages and in all places, have conſidered it as their duty to ſubmit to the *powers that be*; to pray for them; and to obey them in all things not contrary to the word of God: *not only for peace, but alſo for conſcience ſake.*——*My ſon, fear thou the Lord and the king*, was a precept delivered by the Spirit of God. In it God ſtill ſpeaketh to us as to children: nor is it the leſs to be regarded becauſe it was delivered by the mouth of a king*. In agreeableneſs to this did the people of God conduct themſelves, not only towards the princes of David's line, but likewiſe towards all thoſe who ſwayed the ſceptre among the ten tribes.—Though moſt of theſe kings were uſurpers, and came to the throne by treaſons, conſpiracies, and maſſacres; and though they were all corrupt and tyrannical in their adminiſtration, in a greater or leſs degree;—yet the prophets *Elijah*, *Eliſha*, *Hoſea*, and all other worſhippers of the true God, who lived in their dominions, continued to honour them, to ſubmit to their authority, and to obey them in all things lawful:—even while they teſtified againſt their mal-adminiſtration, and reproved them ſharply on that account. And when the remnant of the people were carried captive into Babylon, they ſubmitted to the government eſtabliſhed in that country; many of them accepted poſts under it, and under the Perſian

* Prov. xxiv. 21.

ſian monarchy which ſucceeded it; and they all demeaned themſelves as good and peaceable ſubjects,—yielding a ready obedience in all things lawful, even while they abſolutely refuſed to obey in what was contrary to their religion, or the law of their God. Inſtead of entering into conſpiracies or aſſociations for the ſubverſion of that government, they voluntary diſcovered ſuch conſpiracies when they came to their knowledge, and prevented their execution. In all this they only followed the direction that God himſelf had given them, by the pen of Jeremiah the prophet:—"Seek the peace of the city whi-"ther I have cauſed you to be carried away captives: "and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace there-"of ye ſhall have peace *."

The ſame duty is plainly inculcated, and ſtrongly urged, in every part of the New Teſtament. *Tiberius*, who poſſeſſed the imperial throne at Rome in the time of our Lord's public miniſtry, had no other right to it, but his being the adopted ſon of an uſurper, and being in poſſeſſion of it. He had no right to govern the Jewiſh people, except that of a conqueror. But Tiberius was acknowledged as emperor by the body of the Roman people: and the Jewiſh nation had ſubmitted to his yoke, enjoyed his protection, and had his image and ſuperſcription upon their current money. On theſe accounts, our Lord himſelf enjoined his hearers to pay him tribute, and continue to ſubmit to his authority in things lawful. This is the ſenſe that interpreters, almoſt without exception, put;—indeed it is the only ſenſe that agreeably to the common uſe of language, can be put upon theſe remarkable words of his, *Render to Cæſar the things*

* Jerem. xxix. 7

things that are Cæſar's, and to God the things that are God's *. —The Apoſtle Paul, writing to the Chriſtians at Rome, exhorts them in the moſt pointed manner, to a peaceable ſubjection to Nero's government. "Let every ſoul "be ſubject unto the higher powers, for there is no "power but of God: the powers that be are ordained "of God. Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, "reſiſteth the ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt "ſhall receive to themſelves damnation. For rulers are "not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt "thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which "is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame. For "he is the miniſter of God to thee for good. But if "thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth "not the ſword in vain: for he is the miniſter of God, "a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil. "Wherefore ye muſt needs be ſubject, not only for "wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake †."—To his beloved Timothy he writes thus, "I will that ſupplications, "prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made "for all men: for kings, and all that are in authority; "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life under "them, in all godlineſs and honeſty: for this is good "and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour ‡." —To Titus, he points it out, as one part of that duty which he, as a minſter of the Goſpel, owed both to his maſter and to his hearers, to "Put them in mind to "be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey ma- "giſtrates to be ready to every good work §."—His brother Peter ſpeaks in the ſame ſtrain. Writing to the Jewiſh Chriſtians who were diſperſed through various provinces

* Matth. xxii. 21. † Rom. xii. 1,—5.

‡ 1. Tim. ii. 1,—3. § Tit. iii. 1.

provinces of the leſſer Aſia, he thus ſpeaks " Submit " yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's " ſake; whether it be to the king as ſupreme, or unto " governors, as unto them that are ſent by him, for the " puniſhment of evil doers, and for the praiſe of them " that do well. For ſo is the will of God. Honour all " men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour " the king †."—Theſe paſſages are all ſo plain, that they need no commentary: they are purpoſely ſo expreſt, as to be equally applicable to all Chriſtians, in every age, and in every place. And from them all it is plain, that whatever form of civil government is actually ſet up among any people, and acknowledged by the body of the nation,—all Chriſtians belonging to that nation, are bound by the authority of God, to ſubmit to that government, and to yield obedience to all the lawful commands of thoſe who are entruſted with the adminiſtration of it: living quiet and peaceable lives under them, in all godlineſs and honeſty.

Conformable to this has been the practice of the faithful followers of Chriſt in all ages. The primitive Chriſtians ſhall ſerve for an example. They could not but ſee the very great defects of the Roman government, (now changed from its antient republican form, into a military deſpotiſm,) They knew the unworthy character of moſt of thoſe who, in that period, wore the imperial purple. They teſtified, in their ſeveral ſtations, againſt all that conduct, whereby God was openly diſhonoured. They refuſed, at the hazard of their lives, and of what was dearer than their lives, to obey their civil ſuperiors in things that were contrary to the divine law. And on that

† 1 Pet. ii. 13,—17.

that account they felt more of the tyranny and oppreſſion of the ruling powers than all the other ſubjects of the empire together. No doubt they wiſhed, and often prayed in ſecret, for a reform. But they never ſought it by any ſeditious methods. They never formed aſſociations among themſelves, nor in conjunction with men of any other denomination, for ſubverting or changing the government. They had no conventions, to which they ſent deputies from the different provinces, to conſult about the moſt proper means of bringing about a revolution. Their eccleſiaſtical ſynods, which they held in the face of perſecution, never employed themſelves on ſuch an object. We never ſo much as hear of their taking any part in thoſe diſputes, tumults, or civil commotions, by which the empire was convulſed, at the acceſſion of almoſt every new emperor. They patiently ſubmitted to perſecution and tyranny, in imitation of Him, who, *when he was reviled, reviled not again*, and *when he ſuffered, threatened not*; committing themſelves, as He did, *to Him that judgeth righteouſly*. The more cruel and unjuſt their civil ſuperiors were to them,—the more dutiful were they, in their reſpective ſtations, to their ſuperiors. Thus, by patient continuance in well doing, they put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men. This is the line of conduct which the Chriſtian religion points out to all its adherents; and this they have uniformly followed; unleſs where obliged to ſtand on their defence, againſt thoſe who hunted them down like wild beaſts, or where a long ſeries of intolerable oppreſſion had driven them to deſperation. It cannot be thought impertinent to ſay, to Chriſtians in Britain, at the preſent time, *Go thou and do likewiſe*.

ESSAY II.

Of Revolutions.

THE above reaſoning, ſome may think, tends to eſtabliſh the doctrine of paſſive obedience, and non-reſiſtance: and cuts off all poſſibility, eſpecially in a Chriſtian country, of providing a remedy for any defects in an eſtabliſhed government, or of preventing the abuſe of power. By no means. That abſurd, irrational, and antiſcriptural principle, by which the flatterers and abettors of tyranny have, in former times, attempted to deſtroy Britiſh liberty, and to wreathe about our necks a yoke of arbitrary power;—that principle, I hope, ſhall never more find abettors in this nation. Though the Scriptures require ſubjection to the powers that be; yet this muſt always be underſtood with the following limitations.

1. Every ſubject, as well as every ruler, is anſwerable to God for every part of his conduct. The law of God is of prior obligation to any laws of men; and his authority is ſuperior to that of any earthly magiſtrate.—While the powers of this world enjoin nothing inconſiſtent with the law of God,—that law itſelf requires obedience to them; and diſobedience to them is rebellion

againſt God. But, whenever the laws of men require what the law of God forbids, or forbid what it requires, —the meaneſt peaſant needs not be aſhamed to ſay to the greateſt prince, what the two Apoſtles ſaid to the Jewiſh ſanhedrim;—*Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye**. To ſay, as ſome have done, that whatever is commanded by ſuperiors—the ſole duty of inferiors is to obey; and that, when any thing is done in this way contrary to the will of God, ſuperiors only are anſwerable for it; —this is to degrade men not only into ſlaves or beaſts of burden, but even into mere machines. If my ſuperiors ſin in commanding what is unlawful, I ſin likewiſe in obeying them. No ſuperior can either anſwer for me at the tribunal of God, or bear that puniſhment for me which the divine law annexes to my tranſgreſſion: and it will afford me little comfort, in the day of reckoning, to find thoſe who are now my ſuperiors involved in the ſame condemnation. Not only muſt I obey God, at the expence of diſobedience to human rulers; but I muſt alſo judge for myſelf,—whether I may or may not obey them, without being guilty of diſobedience to Him. And my own judgement, not theirs, muſt regulate my conduct.

2. No man ought to be ſubject to the arbitrary power, or capricious will of another: but all rulers ought to govern by known and fixed laws. Laws ought not to be fixed like thoſe of the Medes and Perſians, ſo as never to be changed: for as, in every government, bad laws may be enacted,—ſo all ſuch laws ſhould be reverſed as ſoon as poſſible. Beſides what was, at firſt, a good and neceſſary law, may, through a change of circumſtances,

* Acts iv. 19.

cumſtances, become bad and pernicious. But they ſhould be ſo fixed as that the ſubject may know what is required of him: and that he who executes, may not have it in his power to alter them. For it may be conſidered as an infallible maxim,—that wherever the legiſlative power and the executive are lodged preciſely in the ſame hands, there is an end of civil liberty.

3. When any government, of what form ſoever it has been, degenerates into habitual tyranny; this may ariſe from the corruption of the people as well as of the rulers. But the people can never be relieved from the duty of allegiance, or fulfilling the compact on their part, becauſe they grow turbulent and ungovernable.--When, inſtead of protecting the people, it habitually oppreſſes them, or ſuffers them to be oppreſſed;—and when all other means prove ineffectual to procure redreſs:—then, undoubtedly, the people have a right to aboliſh it, and ſet up another in its place; or they have a right to make what alterations in it they ſhall find expedient. The original compact being then broken, on the part of government, the people are looſed from their allegiance. And the principle of ſelf-preſervation requires that the people ſhould reſume into their own hands, that power which originally belongs to them. Hence revolutions may not only be ſometimes proper, but abſolutely neceſſary for the preſervation of ſociety.

But *when* this interference of the people becomes neceſſary, or *how long* they ought to bear their grievances, without coming to this extremity, may not be ſo eaſy to determine: indeed, the beſt writers on the ſubject have never attempted it. They uniformly acknowledge, that it might even be dangerous to attempt a deciſion of the queſtion. The following things, relative to it, deſerve conſideration.—

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The relation between magiſtrates and ſubjects bears a near reſemblance to that between huſband and wife. Marriage and magiſtracy are both inſtitutions of the law of nature: both relations are eſtabliſhed by contract; and require the mutual conſent of both parties: both impoſe reciprocal duties upon the relatives: and neither the one nor the other ſhould be lightly broken through. The ſcriptures, and the laws of moſt civilized nations, have determined, that no man ought to put away his wife, except for the cauſe of adultery. And ſurely no people ſhould think of ſubverting an eſtabliſhed government, or diſmiſſing thoſe, in whoſe hands the adminiſtration is entruſted; unleſs for ſomething by which the contract is as manifeſtly violated, as the marriage contract is by adultery; and ſomething which renders it as impoſſible, that the ends of the relation ſhould be gained by its continuance, as adultery does in the other caſe. If one act, or a few acts of injuſtice or mal-adminiſtration were to be conſidered as a ſufficient reaſon for ſubverting the government of a nation; the beſt formed conſtitution would never be out of danger: and the world would never be without revolutions; while rulers, as well as ſubjects are in a ſtate of imperfection.

Neither ſhould a revolution be thought of, till all other habile means of obtaining redreſs, have been employed without ſucceſs. While petitions, remonſtrances, and other peaceable and conſtitutional methods, have any probability of ſucceeding; or even while a partial reform can anſwer the purpoſe, no wiſe man will ever think of going further. Even a reform ſhould never be fought, in any other than a conſtitutional way; unleſs the evil complained of is of ſuch magnitude, as to warrant riſking a national convulſion, with all its dangers, whether to the political conſtitution or to the ſafety and comforts.

comforts of individuals. No man will either pull down his houſe, with a view to build a new one, or endanger its fall by digging under its foundations, ſo long as all its defects may be remedied by a few repairs.

When things come to ſuch a paſs, as to make a revolution neceſſary, the matter will carry its own evidence. No man will need to be informed that ſuch is the caſe. Every man will ſee;—every man will feel it. The whole nation will at once beſtir themſelves; and every man whoſe mind is not enſlaved, or who does not profit by the ſyſtem of oppreſſion, will be ready to bear his part. They who are beſt informed will always be moſt forward; and they who have moſt to loſe, knowing that they ſtand the faireſt mark for the rapacious hand of tyranny, will always be moſt zealous for the breaking of its arm. Hence it is manifeſt, that while the majority of a nation continue ſatisfied with their government, and while that majority conſiſts of thoſe who have the beſt opportunity to know the real ſtate of things, and of thoſe who have moſt at ſtake; all attempts of a minority to ſubvert the government muſt be unwarrantable and ſeditious.

Under every government there will always be a number of diſcontented perſons. Ambitious men, who thirſt for power, for places, or for penſions, will always rail againſt that adminiſtration in which they are not allowed to bear a part; and revile thoſe whom they envy. Impious men, who trample upon the authority of God, impugn His religion, and perhaps deny His being,—can never be expected peaceably to ſubmit to the authority of fellow-creatures. Men who have ſpent their own eſtates in extravagance and diſſipation, and ſee no other way to furniſh themſelves with the means of continuing the ſame courſe of life,—may hope to retrieve their fortunes

tunes by raiſing or fomenting convulſions in the ſtate. He whoſe conſcience allowed him to ſquander what was his own, and perhaps much that was never his own, in the brothel or at the gaming table,—will feel little remorſe in attempting to reimburſe himſelf with the ſpoils of his country. Men addicted to thoſe crimes, which the laws of all civilized nations muſt puniſh, will readily cry out againſt the laws—as unjuſt; and againſt thoſe who execute them—as tyrannical. The thief will complain, if he cannot ſteal with impunity: the highwayman may think it hard that he cannot follow his calling undiſturbed: and the infamous dealer in uncuſtomed goods may grumble becauſe ſmuggling is reckoned a crime. It is not to be wondered at, if even honeſt men complain of thoſe burdens, which, from their peculiar circumſtances fall heavy upon themſelves. The Weſt India merchant may complain of the duties on ſugar and rum: the diſtiller, the tallow chandler, and others in ſimilar circumſtances, may be diſſatisfied with the exciſe laws:—and ſo on. When, among any of theſe claſſes of men, there ariſes a perſon of a turbulent ſpirit, yet capable of ſpeaking or writing plauſibly,—he may eaſily raiſe a fermentation in the minds of well-meaning labourers and mechanics; who, by their ſituation in life, have little opportunity to read, to think, or to know much, about matters of government. This he will find the more eaſy, if he catches the time, when an accidental ſcarcity of proviſions, or ſtagnation of trade, deprives them of employment or of bread. He may tell them that all this is owing to government; that they will never be better, while the preſent ſyſtem continues; and that nothing but a revolution will keep them from ſtarving.—Nor is it any wonder, if they, in the ſimplicity of their hearts, believe him;—and all cry out for a change

change. But, if we muſt have a revolution whenever ſuch things as theſe happen, no nation on earth will be one year without them: and that government which is moſt friendly to liberty will always be ſooneſt overturned; becauſe a government really tyrannical would diſpatch the man, without ceremony, and perhaps without noiſe, who ſhould attempt to inflame people's minds by ſuch writings or ſpeeches; ſo that few would venture to give ſuch umbrage: and the means of circulating diſcontents, or forming combinations, would be very limited.

As no wiſe man will begin to build a houſe, till he firſt ſit down and count the coſt;—ſo no wiſe people will attempt to overturn their government, till they have ſeriouſly weighed the conſequences; and have, at leaſt, a probability, that the cure will not be worſe than the diſeaſe. No tyrant will ſubmit to his depoſition without reſiſtance, if reſiſtance is in his power. If the people ſhould fail in their attempts to diſplace him, they do but rivet their own chains, and embolden him to be more tyrannical. How many inſtances of this does hiſtory furniſh? And though they ſhould, at laſt, be ſucceſsful in the ſtruggle, how much blood and treaſure muſt be expended; and what accumulated calamities muſt be ſuffered, before the end can be gained? The Dutch Provinces were not emancipated, till after a war of forty years: in which millions of lives were loſt; and many millions of money. They often ſuffered miſeries, during the conteſt, that we cannot ſee human nature ſupporting without aſtoniſhment. All this, no doubt, redounded to their honour, when, at laſt, their lion emerged free. But would they not have been arrant fools, if they had expoſed themſelves to all this for no cauſe; or on account of ſome trifling inconvenience? Surely, before we bring ourſelves into ſuch a ſituation, we

ſhould

ſhould ſeriouſly conſider, whether any evils we ſuffer, are equal to thoſe, to which we would expoſe ourſelves? Or whether that which we ſeek after, is of ſuch importance, as, on its account, to put in hazard at once what we enjoy and what we may ſuffer?

Once, indeed, a revolution was effected in Britain, and the nation ſcarce felt the ſhock. But the revolution of 1688, was obtained by what was juſtly termed "the *ſwing* of the whole people," and even it was not ſo cheaply purchaſed as ſome may apprehend. So that, if the matter is attentively conſidered, that inſtance will not encourage us raſhly to venture upon another ſuch attempt. From the time that the Stewart family aſcended the throne of England, a ſcheme was laid to ſubject both kingdoms to a yoke of arbitrary power. During the life of James,—partly by his king-craft, and partly by the real inſignificance of his character,—the nation was prevented from being much alarmed. When they were rouſed, in the days of his ſon, what a deluge of blood was ſpilt; and what convulſions did the three kingdoms ſuffer, before the affair was ſettled? At the reſtoration of the ſecond Charles, the nation, in a frenzy of loyalty, ariſing from their being heartily weary of uſurpation and anarchy,—gave away, in one day, all that they had gained by a ſucceſsful war of ten years. The conſequence was, that the ſame arbitrary ſyſtem was reſumed: and human nature recoils at the recital of the fines, impriſonments, forfeitures, baniſhments, tortures, executions, and murders, that diſgraced the reigns of the bloody brothers. Now, the revolution of 1688, was really purchaſed at the expence of all that the nation ſuffered, in the ſtruggle againſt the deſpotiſm of that family, and under Cromwell's uſurpation, during fifty years before. For what was effected

fected by the revolution, was the very thing that was aimed at by the Scottiſh nation, when they firſt took up arms againſt Charles I. and by the parliament of England, till Cromwell turned them into a rump.

After all, the perſon muſt either be blinded with infidelity, or utterly unacquainted with the hiſtory of that time, who does not ſee, that the ſucceſs of that attempt was more owing to a manifeſt interpoſal of the hand of God, than to all the activity of men. Had not the tyrant been ſo infatuated, that he gave no credit to all the information he received of the Prince's deſign, till he ſaw it put in execution, and then, in oppoſition to what had been his known character, deſerted his throne, his capital, and his kingdom, in ſuch a cowardly manner, ſoon after the landing of his ſon-in-law;—the Revolution had not been ſo eaſily brought about. Had he been permitted to conſult his friends, concert his meaſures, collect his forces, and uſe ſuch means to repel the invaſion, as any man would have uſed, whom God had not appointed to deſtruction;—the attempt of the prince of Orange might poſſibly have iſſeud in the ſame manner as that of the Duke of Monmouth and the Earl of Argyle had done ſome time before. Had he made ſuch reſiſtance in England as his friends made for him in Scotland, or as himſelf afterwards made in Ireland; who can tell what it might have coſt the nation, before they had got rid of his deſpotic ſyſtem?

Neither ought it to be forgotten, that it is always dangerous for the common people to interfere, in matters of this kind. I mean nothing diſhonourable to the common people. I count it no diſgrace that I am one of them, or that my father was ſo before me. But how can it be ſuppoſed, that men, who have ſpent their lives at the plough, at the loom, or at the needle; whoſe

time has been occupied in providing, by the labour of their hands, a ſubſiſtence for themſelves and their families; and who can ſcarcely find leiſure to read their Bibles, and to think about the weighty concerns of an approaching eternity,—that ſuch men ſhould be qualified to erect forms of government, or to manage the affairs of a great nation? As ſoon ſhould I expect to hear a man explain all the phenomena of nature, who never knew the firſt principles of mathematics.——When the multitude are once rouſed into fury, they know not where to ſtop: and, therefore, after overturning the exiſting conſtitution, they could ſcarcely fail to introduce ſuch violence, anarchy and confuſion, as would prove far more intolerable than the worſt ſort of government.

Our anceſtors were aware of this, in the period above referred to. It was not by forming ſocieties or aſſociations among the common people, that *our* Revolution was brought about. It was not by holding conventions, in which journeymen taylors, barbers, and ſtocking-makers, ſat as deputies choſen by their brethen,—called themſelves Friends of the People, and conſulted together for the good of the nation. The wiſeſt men in the three kingdoms,—the men who, by their rank in life, had the beſt opportunities of acquiring political knowledge, and the greateſt degree of influence in the country, laid their plans among themſelves, and concerted meaſures with the prince of Orange, without the privity of thoſe in the lower ranks of life. The common people, though they rejoiced at the event, were as much ſurprized when they ſaw it, as the king himſelf. And it deſerves peculiar attention, that all this was the reſult of a conviction, that a government merely republican could not ſubſiſt in Britain: and that it was peculiarly dangerous, to allow the common people to interfere,

fere, in the management of public affairs. To this purpoſe, I beg leave to tranſcribe a paſſage from a foreign writer of reputation, on this ſubject. "The royal "power being thus annihilated," [by the death of Charles I.]- "the Engliſh made fruitleſs attempts to ſubſti- "tute a republican government in its ſtead. Subjected "at firſt, to the power of the principal leaders in the "long parliament, they ſaw that power expire, only "to paſs, without bounds, into the hands of a protec- "tor. They ſaw it afterwards parcelled out among the "chiefs of different bodies of troops; and thus ſhifting "without end, from one kind of ſubjection to another, "they were at length convinced, that an attempt to "eſtabliſh liberty in a great nation, by making the peo- "ple interfere, in the common buſineſs of government, "is of all attempts the moſt chimerical; that the au- "thority of all, with which men are amuſed, is in re- "ality, no more than the authority of a few powerful "individuals who divide the republic among themſelves; "and they reſted, at laſt, in the boſom of the only "conſtitution, which is fit for a great ſtate, and a "free people; I mean that in which a choſen number "deliberate, and a ſingle hand executes *."

All the above obſervations are mournfully confirmed and illuſtrated, by the recent example of our neighbours in France. Their firſt national aſſembly, in the year 1789, was convened with ſome meaſure of agreeableneſs to their ancient conſtitution, which had been ſuſpended

* See De Lolme on the Engliſh conſtitution p. 53.—A book which I would earneſtly recommend, to be peruſed by every perſon in Britain, before he put his hand to any attempt to change the government of his country.

pended for ages. Many of them were men of rank, of property, of learning, and political knowledge. Had they been left to the free exercise of their own judgements, there is no doubt that they would have given to their country a constitution, which might have proved the glory of France, and a pattern to other nations. But unfortunately, there were among them, a party of factious and designing men, who formed connections with the populace of Versailles and Paris. And soon, very soon, those beginnings which had given pleasure to every friend of liberty, and of mankind; gave place to the most gloomy and disasterous appearances. At first the common people took no active part, otherwways than in chooſing their representatives; but no sooner did the events of the 14th of July 1789, show that popular favour might be the road to power, than the *Sans Culottes* began to think themselves capable to manage the affairs of the nation. From that time, the exclamations of the galleries dictated the resolutions of the Assembly: which was then deserted by its most virtuous members. The king was carried a prisoner to Paris, where he remained in the power of an organized mob. By this means, a constitution was adopted, which, though professedly designed to have been a limited monarchy, yet actually gave an opportunity to those who courted the populace, and knew how to flatter their passions, to become the despots of the nation. The second National Assembly was still more under popular influence; and the Convention most of all. From the time of their meeting, all matters were carried by the votes of the Jacobin Club, or by the sovereign mob of Paris. Then every thing went into confusion. Revolutions followed upon the back of revolutions. Five hundred tyrants started up instead of one. More blood has been shed

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by their republican deſpots, in the ſhort ſpace of eighteen months, ſince the fatal 10th of Auguſt, 1792, than has been ſhed by all their kings together, (if we except the maſſacre of St Bartholomew, which was the work of a faction, more properly than of a king), ſince the days of Charles the Great. And now liberty, property, morality, and religion, are all annihilated at once: and France is become *an execration, and a hiſſing, and a curſe, among all nations.*

Perhaps it may be thought unneceſſary to apply the above reaſoning to ourſelves in Britain; becauſe, for ſome months back, no one pretends to wiſh for a revolution. *Reform* being now the word, in the mouth of all our mal-contents. But, however they may now ſpeak, every man, who had his ears open a year ago, knows that nothing leſs was then talked of, than ſuch a total revolution as would bring us into the ſame ſituation with our neighbours beyond the channel. Our king was to be diſmiſt, as a piece of uſeleſs and expenſive lumber; our parliament was to be turned into a convention; and our Friends of the People were to be what the Jacobins are in France. Though they find themſelves obliged to change their dialect, becauſe Government begin to puniſh ſome ring-leaders of ſedition, their views are by no means changed. They now ſeek a reform, only becauſe they think it would be one ſtep towards a revolution.

But will any of the moſt diſaffected among us ſay, that we have any ſuch occaſion for a revolution, as they had in France ſix years ago; or as our fathers had in Britain a hundred years before? We have no *Lettres de cachet*, by which a man may be ſeized, when going about his lawful buſineſs, or even in his own houſe, carried he knows not where, and kept during the pleaſure

of

of a whore or a paraſite, without ever knowing whom he had offended, or how. We have no *Baſtilles*, in which an innocent perſon may be forced to ſpend his whole life in a dungeon, without trial, without appeal, and even without allowance to prefer a petition for juſtice. No man's will is our law. Neither the king himſelf, nor any of his miniſters dare touch a hair of our head, nor a farthing of our property, unleſs in execution of the law. Our parliament cannot be forced to regiſter oppreſſive edicts iſſued, or oppreſſive taxes impoſed, by arbitrary power: nor dare any tyrant baniſh, impriſon, or otherways violate our parliament or its members, if they ſhould refuſe to do ſo. All this was but a ſmall part of what the French people were liable to, before the year 1788.—Neither will any man ſay, that our king or his miniſters have ever attempted to make, aboliſh or ſuſpend laws, by the mere force of prerogative,—to levy taxes without the authority of parliament,—to keep up ſtanding armies, in time of peace, without their concurrence,—to ſubject to fines, impriſonment, or military execution without trial, by reſpectable juries,—to authorize his military officers to put innocent men to death, without ever bringing them before a civil magiſtrate, to pack or corrupt juries, to inſtruct judges how they ſhould proceed, or what ſentence they ſhould paſs, in cauſes that might come before them,—to rob corporations of their charters, or to diſplace their magiſtrates, who had been regularly choſen, and appoint others in their room, by mere court authority. Yet theſe are but a few of thoſe tyrannical meaſures, by which the laſt James forfeited his right to the crown.—Unleſs we have grievances to complain of, of equal magnitude with theſe, we can have no ſuch occaſion for a revolution as our fathers had.

ESSAY

ESSAY III.

Of the British Constitution.

THAT we may know what occaſion we have for a change, it will be neceſſary to conſider what is the footing upon which we ſtand.——That Britain had a conſtitution, and one of the beſt that any nation was ever bleſt with, has not only been the boaſt of Britiſh ſubjects, but the unanimous verdict of all foreigners of reputation, till very lately. A principal reaſon why our fathers turned off king James was, that he had violated the conſtitution of the kingdom. From that time, till within two years paſt, every man who thought it his intereſt to rail againſt Government had it ſtill as the burden of his ditty, that the meaſures of adminiſtration were inconſiſtent with the conſtitution. To arraign the conſtitution, itſelf, the moſt turbulent durſt not venture: much leſs had any man ſufficient confidence to tell us that we had no conſtitution at all. This honour was reſerved for *Thomas Paine:* and, to the aſtoniſhment of mankind, he was believed, and his aſſertion retailed, by the very men whoſe cry had been, *the Conſtitution! the Conſtitution!* for many years before. And all the proof adduced for this new doctrine is, that our conſtitution is

not

not written down in a pamphlet, and ſold for a ſhilling, like that of France, or theirs in America! But, in ſpite of Mr Paine, and all his new colleagues, the world knows that Britain has a conſtitution, which we fondly hope their hundred thouſand invaders, though joined by all their friends and well-wiſhers among ourſelves, ſhall not be able to ſhake. It conſiſts of a ſyſtem of laws, by which the people of Great Britain have agreed to be governed. It comprehends the common law, which, though it was never written, is as well known, and much better eſtabliſhed, than any printed conſtitution, either in France or America. It is explained and extended in various acts of parliament. It is ſummed up in *Magna Charta*, and in the *Bill of Rights*. It is impreſſed on the mind and heart of every loyal ſubject in Britain: never to be erazed, by any efforts, either of tyranny or ſedition.

Any full delineation of the Britiſh conſtitution cannot be expected in a publication of this nature. Nor does the writer of theſe eſſays pretend to be qualified for it. All that is here intended, is only to mention a few obvious advantages that it poſſeſſes, and which would be in danger of being loſt, if any change ſhould take place in it.

Every man knows, that in Britain, the legiſlative authority, or the power of making laws, is lodged in the three Eſtates, KING, LORDS, and COMMONS. But all the three have not the ſame powers, in this reſpect. The King can propoſe no laws, nor bring any bill into either houſe of parliament. Except for the reverſals of attainder Nay, if any perſon, while a bill was under conſideration, ſhould but inſinuate how the king would wiſh the debate to iſſue, it would be conſidered as a breach of privilege: and the bill would be rejected. The king's judgement is never aſked, nor

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n it be given, concerning any law, till it has paſt both
ouſes. And thus, all his concern in the legiſlation is
duced to a mere negative. Another difference is, that
money-bills muſt not only originate in the Houſe of
mmons; but muſt receive all its form in that Houſe.
en the ſmalleſt alteration made in it by the Lords,
uld cauſe the whole to be ſet aſide; though it went
ly to rectify a grammatical miſtake. Thus, in regard
all taxes, or burdens that can be laid upon the people,
e power of the Lords is alſo reduced to a negative.
he people of Britain can only be taxed by their own
preſentatives. No law can paſs, or become binding
pon the ſubject, till it has a majority for it, firſt in one
ouſe, and then in the other; and, laſt of all, it muſt re-
ive the royal aſſent.

To balance the power of the Houſe of Commons, in
lation to money-bills, the Houſe of Lords is the ſu-
reme court of judicature in the nation. They receive
peals, in civil cauſes, from all inferior courts; and
ive a final deciſion. All Peers, accuſed of any crime,
uſt be tried by them: and likewiſe all Commoners,
ho are impeached, by the other Houſe.

The executive power is lodged ſolely in the King.
rom the moment that a law is enacted, neither Houſe
f Parliament has any thing to do with it. Every mem-
er of both Houſes is as much ſubject to it, as any other
erſon in the kingdom: and it will be executed with the
me impartiality upon them, as upon any other perſon.
ea, the King himſelf is not above the law, though it
elongs to him to put it in execution. It is, indeed, a
axim in our law, that *the King can do no wrong;* that
, if any thing contrary to law is done by the King, or
y any in his name, the King in perſon cannot be call-
d to account, or puniſhed for it. But the miniſter, to

whoſe department it belongs, is accountable for it, and is liable to puniſhment, becauſe he did not prevent it. Thus Britain has one happineſs, beyond almoſt any other nation in the world, that no law can be binding upon any ſubject, that is not equally binding upon every perſon concerned in the making of it. And, therefore, our legiſlators would hurt themſelves, as much as any other perſon, by enacting laws that were really bad.

It has been juſtly obſerved, that, under this mixed conſtitution, we enjoy all the advantages of all the three ſorts of government, *Monarchy*, *Ariſtocracy*, and *Democracy*, without being ſubject to the inconveniencies of any of them. The nation is not ſubjected to the will of one man, who is himſelf ſubject to no rule but his own caprice, either in making laws or in the execution of them, or in his private conduct towards individuals: and yet our government has all the ſtrength and energy of monarchy. It has likewiſe all the wiſdom of ariſtocracy, without ſubjecting the body of the people to a junto of men, who, conſidering themſelves as of a ſuperior ſpecies, and having an intereſt oppoſite to that of the Commons, might always be expected to conſult their own advantage at the expence of the people. In the mean time, the Commons have ſufficient influence in the government, to prevent their ever being oppreſſed by the other two eſtates, or by either of them; while we are ſecured againſt thoſe tumults and convulſions, and likewiſe againſt that dilatorineſs, and that unſteadineſs of councils, that muſt always attend a mere republican, or democratic government.

Thus each of the three branches of the legiſlature, forms an effectual check upon the other two. If any bill ſhould paſs in the Upper Houſe, prejudicial to the intereſt of the people, it may be rejected in the Lower Houſe.

Houſe. If by reaſon of a temporary enthuſiaſm, or otherways, any thing ſhould paſs in the Houſe of Commons, prejudicial to the rights of the crown, of the peers, or of the nation at large,—the Houſe of Lords would probably throw it out. And if any thing ſhould paſs both houſes, tending to abridge the royal prerogative, or to lay ſuch a reſtraint upon adminiſtration, as would prevent the regular execution of the laws, or lay the nation open to the inſults of a foreign enemy,—ſtill it may be prevented from paſſing into a law, by the king's with-holding his aſſent: for, though this branch of the royal prerogative has never been exerciſed, ſince the acceſſion of the preſent family, no perſon doubts its exiſtence.

The Houſe of Lords has, by ſome who affect popularity, been conſidered as a grievance. But, inſtead of being ſo, it is both the ornament and the bulwark of the conſtitution. On the one hand, it has always been by the interpoſition of the peers, or greater barons, that the power of the crown has been reſtrained, when a prince of an arbitrary diſpoſition was in danger of enſlaving the people; as in the days of King John, of Henry III. and others. On the other hand, as often as the Commons have attempted to encroach upon the royal prerogative, and ſubject the crown to their will, the lords have interpoſed to prevent it. One remarkable inſtance of this took place in the beginning of the preſent century: when the Commons, by the expedient of tacking any favourite meaſure, which they found diſagreeable to the crown, to a money bill, thought to oblige the King to paſs what laws they pleaſed,—the Peers effectually defeated that dangerous ſcheme, by making it a ſtanding rule of their houſe, never to paſs any bill of another nature, that is tacked to a money-bill. When the

the long parliament abolifhed the Houfe of Peers, the natural conſequence was, firſt the total abolition of royalty, and then the deſtruction of the power of the Commons, and the rights of the people,—and the ſubjection of the whole nation to the deſpotiſm of an uſurper. ——If ever another attempt ſhould be made to exclude that houſe from its ſhare in the legiſlative authority, ſimilar conſequences muſt needs follow.

That the Lords and the Commons ſit and vote in two ſeparate houſes, is another peculiar advantage of the Britiſh conſtitution. Were they to ſit in the ſame aſſembly, and to carry all things by a majority of votes, either the one claſs or the other would neceſſarily predominate. If the Lords could maintain ſuch an influence, as to bring over to their party as many of the Commons, as, along with themſelves might conſtitute a majority of the whole, then the rights of the people would be trampled upon, and themſelves reduced to ſlavery. On the other hand; if the Commons, by virtue of their numbers, ſhould carry all their own way, then the privileges of the nobility would ſoon be loſt. They would no longer hold the balance between the crown and the people: and, through the continual ſtruggle between liberty and prerogative, the one or the other muſt gradually ſink; ſo that our government muſt ſoon degenerate either into deſpotiſm or anarchy. Some of the beſt politicians conſider the uniting of the nobility with the third eſtate, into one aſſembly, as the firſt ſtep towards that ſtate of confuſion, in which our neighbours in France are now involved. And ſimilar conſequences muſt enſue, if ever ſuch an union ſhould be attempted among us. The ſafety of Britiſh liberty depends upon each of the two houſes retaining their negative

gative over the other; and the crown's having a negative over both.

For although it would be ruinous to liberty, if the executive power were preciſely in the ſame hands with the legiſlative; yet it is a very great advantage, that the king, to whom the execution of the laws is entruſted, ſhould be one branch of the legiſlature, and have a negative upon the whole. If this were not the caſe, he might be obliged to act againſt his judgement and conſcience, in executing laws which he could not approve: Hence, not only would he be a ſlave upon the throne; but occaſion would likewiſe be given to ſuch remiſſneſs and partiality in the execution of the laws, as, in proceſs of time, muſt enfeeble the conſtitution. On the other hand, if the executive power were in the hands of the whole legiſlative body, there would be none to call them to account for mal-adminiſtration: They might not only make what laws they pleaſed; they might likewiſe execute the laws, or ſuffer them to ly dormant, juſt as it ſhould ſuit their own intereſt or ambition. With us, as ſoon as a law is paſt, they who compoſe the two Houſes of Parliament have no more to do with it than any other ſubject. The execution of it paſſes into other hands. And they who are to execute it, muſt be anſwerable to them who made it, if its execution be neglected or perverted; while they who made it are as much ſubject to its operation as any other perſons in the kingdom.

This ſuggeſts another peculiar advantage of our conſtitution: that as all ranks of perſons enjoy the rights of free men; our legiſlators can never have any intereſt in oppreſſing their inferiors; but every law that is detrimental to them, muſt prove hurtful alſo to themſelves. Moſt members of both Houſes of Parliament,

are

are men of landed property. It can never be their intereſt to oppreſs their tenants and dependants; becauſe they would thereby diſable them for paying their rents, and ſo diminiſh the value of their own eſtates. Thus the people employed in agriculture are ſafe from any fear of oppreſſive laws, unleſs the majority of both Houſes of Parliament ſhould become ſo infatuated as to ruin themſelves, with a view to ruin their country. They who are employed in manufactures, and in trade, have an equal ſecurity, though it may not be ſo readily perceived, at firſt view. It is plain that the increaſing number of trading and manufacturing people muſt increaſe the conſumpt of proviſions; this increaſes the demand for the fruits of the earth, and, of courſe, advances the price; and this again advances the value of land. Accordingly, the rent of land is advanced, in moſt parts of Scotland, one half, or more, ſince our trade and manufactures began to flouriſh. And notwithſtanding this, land that ſold at twenty years purchaſe, not many years ago, now ſells at thirty, forty, and even fifty years purchaſe of the preſent rent. This may be partly owing to improvements in agriculture; but that it is likewiſe owing, in a great meaſure, to trade and manufactures, is plain from this circumſtance, that this riſe in the value of land is moſt remarkable, in thoſe places, where theſe are moſt attended to. Beſides, it is plain, that, by means of theſe, the luxuries of life can be enjoyed by all ranks of perſons, at a much eaſier rate than they otherwiſe would be. We can ſurely wear ſilks and cottons, manufactured at Mancheſter, Glaſgow, and Paiſley, much cheaper than when they were all imported from Spain or the Eaſt-Indies. Now, can any man ſuppoſe, that our legiſlators will be ſo blind to their own intereſt, as to deprive themſelves of all theſe

advantages

advantages, by willingly cruſhing trade, or cramping manufactures? It is true, that many of them are but little acquainted with theſe matters: hence trade has ſometimes been hurt by thoſe laws which were intended to promote it. But we are every day in leſs danger from this quarter. A good number of perſons have ſeats in Parliament who are as deeply engaged, both in manufactures and in trade, as any others in the nation. And this will be more and more the caſe, as trade and manufactures are extended. Much attention will be paid to their judgement, in framing laws relative to theſe matters: and whenever any law of that kind is found, by experience, to be hurtful, there can be no reaſon to doubt but it will be repealed.

In other countries, where there is a hereditary monarchy, and a hereditary nobility,—the nobility have an intereſt in taking part with the crown to oppreſs the people. But, with us, it is the intereſt of the peerage to protect the people from oppreſſion: and, accordingly, whenever the liberties of the people have been in real danger, the nobility have ever been as active for the preſervation of them as the people themſelves could be.——This is owing to the very great difference between the ſtate of the Britiſh peerage and that of the nobility in other countries. In France, for inſtance, their nobility amounted to *fifty thouſand*. They enjoyed exemption from all taxes and public burdens, except a very inconſiderable ſhare of the land-tax. They held the common people in all the bondage of feudal vaſſalage; and diſdained to intermix with them by marriage, or by engaging in any kind of trade. They treated the common people as if they had belonged to an inferior ſpecies of beings. All the deſcendents of the nobility were nobles: they formed a nation within a nation: and

their

their intereſts were directly oppoſite to thoſe of the reſt of mankind.——The ſame is the caſe in Spain, with this difference, that their *Hidalgos* are ſtill more numerous, and their contempt of the people more ſupercilious. In moſt other nations of Europe it is little otherwiſe. But, with us, all the nobility, including the Scottiſh peers, do not amount to ſix hundred. They are ſubject to all taxes, and contribute to the expences of the ſtate as the commons do. As individuals, they have no juriſdiction over the meaneſt of the people. They not only intermarry with the commons; but their children ſink into commoners, and mingle with the crowd. Many of them betake themſelves to trade, to agriculture, and even to manufactures. The eldeſt ſon only enjoys the peerage; and even he is a commoner during his father's life. Thus, as they derive their honour from the king; and, to preſerve their own luſtre, muſt ſupport that of the Crown:—ſo their intereſt is the ſame with that of the people; and, for the ſake of their own families, they muſt watch over the people's rights: becauſe any encroachment upon them would affect their own children as much as thoſe in the loweſt ranks of life.

But, if ever the nobility ſhould find, or think it their *intereſt*, to oppreſs the people; they cannot have it in their *power*, while our conſtitution remains. One branch of the legiſlature is always choſen by the people: and it muſt be the fault of their electors if the members of the Houſe of Commons are not men of abilities and of integrity; for ſurely a competent number of ſuch men may ſtill be found in Britain, degenerate as the times are. If any law, prejudicial to the people, ſhould paſs in the Houſe of Peers, even though it were ſupported by the whole influence of the Crown,—the Commons have

power

power to reject it. Every attentive perſon muſt have obſerved, that, ſince the Revolution, the Houſe of Commons is the moſt powerful branch of our legiſlature: and long may they continue to be ſo! for, while that is the caſe, the people of Great Britain can never be oppreſſed; unleſs they are betrayed by their own choſen repreſentatives.

Paſſing many other advantages of a political nature, which I do not conſider myſelf as qualified fully to diſcuſs; one thing that ſhould recommend our conſtitution, in a peculiar manner, to diſſenters of every denomination, is, that its genius is more tolerant, and more favourable to religious liberty, than that of moſt other nations. I know that ſome penal laws, on account of religion, are ſtill in force; and others are only ſuſpended. Were adminiſtration rigorous in the execution of exiſting laws, *we* might be ſtill expoſed to conſiderable hardſhips. But we all know and feel that we enjoy a degree of religious liberty, which our fathers would have purchaſed at a great expence, and to which our brethren in other countries are abſolute ſtrangers. We are allowed to worſhip God according to the dictates of conſcience: and no man is puniſhed for maintaining, nor even for propagating his religious opinions, if they are not deſtructive of the public peace. We are ſubjected to no additional taxes, nor to any poſitive inconvenience, beyond our brethren who adhere to the religious eſtabliſhment. We enjoy the ſame protection, in our perſons, our property, and our civil liberty, as they do. Even in our religious aſſemblies no man is ſuffered to diſturb or offer us any violence. We labour, indeed, under ſome legal incapacities, which, to a few ambitious perſons among us, may ſeem hard: but how trifling are theſe in compariſon of the privileges we enjoy! And

even from theſe we might have hoped ſoon to be relieved; had not ſome among us, by taking part in the meaſures of ſedition, given occaſion for government to conſider us all as turbulent and factious men. I hope they may ſtill be undeceived: and, if diſſenters will but ſhew themſelves good ſubjects, the tolerant genius of our conſtitution will gradually operate towards placing us upon an equal footing with our fellow ſubjects in all political reſpects *.——It alſo deſerves the particular conſideration of the friends of divine revelation, that our conſtitution bears a nearer reſemblance than any other on earth to that of the Jewiſh nation, which was framed by God himſelf. They had their kings, as we have; and their monarchy, like ours, was hereditary, in David's family. Their government, likewiſe, had its ariſtocratic branch, in the ſanhedrim, or great council of ſeventy-two. And that there was ſomething democratic in

* It may be thought ſtrange that this tolerant genius of the conſtitution ſhould be mentioned as an advantage by a Seceder; ſeeing, in our teſtimony, we mention it as a particular grievance, that, in the year 1712, an almoſt boundleſs toleration was granted, &c.! But any perſon who will give himſelf the trouble to read that article of our teſtimony will ſee, that our reaſons for finding fault with that toleration were;—its tendency "to weaken the government and diſcipline of the "church; and its being intended to ſtrengthen and ſupport a party "who had openly eſpouſed the intereſt of a popiſh Pretender,—and "whoſe meetings were ſeminaries of diſaffection to our ſovereign King "George, and the Proteſtant ſucceſſion." On the ſame grounds it was reprobated by the commiſſion of the General Aſſembly, as appears by their addreſs to the Queen that year. Beſides, that toleration might juſtly be found fault with: as containing a bare ſuſpenſion of the penal laws in certain caſes; and as proceeding upon the ſuppoſition that the civil powers have a right to puniſh men for their religious principles.——They who, either formerly or more lately, have attempted to render Seceders obnoxious to government, as an intolerant ſect, ſworn to

in their conſtitution is plain; from thoſe aſſemblies of the people that were held about the affair of the Levite's concubine,—about the bringing up of the Ark to Jeruſalem,—about Rehoboam's ſucceſſion; and on other ſimilar occaſions. Thus it is manifeſt that the Jewiſh conſtitution was a mixed monarchy, as ours is. Their kings, though they had no legiſlative authority,—their laws being given by God himſelf,—yet had more power than our kings have, as might be made to appear in various inſtances. And their popular aſſemblies only met occaſionally: whereas our Parliament muſt meet every year, or elſe the whole buſineſs of government muſt ſtand ſtill. In theſe, and ſome other reſpects, our government is even more favourable to the people than theirs was: and yet it would amount to blaſphemy to ſay, that their form of government, planned by Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, was ſubverſive of true liberty, or of any of the common or unalienable rights of men.

Whatever other men think or ſay about the Britiſh conſtitution,

to *extirpate* with fire and ſword all who differ from them in their religious principles;—muſt have little acquaintance either with Seceders or their principles. They have the honour to be the firſt ſociety who have ſet the doctrine of toleration upon its proper foundation, in the eſſential difference between the kingdom of Chriſt and the kingdoms of this world.—Our opinion is, that all members of the church of Chriſt ſhould exert themſelves, in their reſpective ſtations, to extirpate all falſe doctrines, and all ſinful practices, by a proper uſe of the *ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* But, that heretics, or the profeſſors of a falſe religion, while peaceable members of civil ſociety, are to be extirpated by penal laws, and by civil pains and puniſhments;—is a doctrine that we abhor. The office of civil magiſtrates being founded in the law of nature,—they can have no right to interpoſe their authority in matters of pure revelation; or to puniſh any perſon for having views different from their own, in ſuch matters.

conſtitution, Seceders, I truſt will reflect, that it has undergone no change to the worſe, ſince their principles concerning it were clearly ſtated, and laid before the world; in the *Declaration and Defence*, ſubjoined to the *Aſſociate Preſbytery's* anſwers to Mr *Nairn*. We have always born teſtimony againſt ſome things in the united conſtitution of the two kingdoms: particularly againſt its incorporating the church with the ſtate; making the kingdom of Chriſt an appendage of the kingdoms of this world; againſt the abſurdity of eſtabliſhing one mode of religion in England, and another in Scotland; and againſt allowing a temporal lordſhip, and a place in the legiſlature, to the Engliſh biſhops as office-bearers of the church; contrary to the expreſs command of Chriſt *. Againſt theſe, and other evils of a ſimilar nature, both in the conſtitution and adminiſtration, relative to the church and religion, our teſtimony has never given offence to government.

This ſtrengthens our obligation to adhere, with equal firmneſs to our declared principles, relative to the civil part of our conſtitution; as contained in the pamphlet above referred to, where, " the preſbytery affirms, that " we ought to acknowledge the preſent civil authority " over theſe nations, and ſubjection thereunto, in lawful commands." This is the principle, in defence of which the whole book is compoſed. In an act of preſbytery ſubjoined to it, they thus expreſs themſelves: " The preſbytery do hereby condemn the dangerous extreme of impugning the preſent civil authority over " theſe nations, and ſubjection thereunto in lawful " commands, as contrary to the plain tenor of ſcripture, " and

* Luke xxii. 25.

" and to the known principles of this church in her " confeſſion and covenants, and of all other reformed " churches;" as well as " the dangerous extreme of e- " ſpouſing principles in favours of propagating religion " by offenſive arms; contrary to that diſpoſition which " ought to be in all the followers of Chriſt, who came " not to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them." Perhaps it may be pleaded, that as this act of preſbytery was never a term of Chriſtian communion among us, private perſons in our communion are not bound to adhere to it. But ſurely their acceding to our communion implies ſuch an acquieſcence in all our known principles, as not to diſturb the peace of the church by a public oppoſition to them. And, if this argument have any weight, with regard to private Chriſtians, it cannot apply to office-bearers; for every miniſter among us, and every elder, publicly and ſolemnly declares, that he is " ſatisfied with, and purpoſes to adhere unto and main- " tain the principles about the preſent civil government, " which are declared and maintained in" the above mentioned pamphlet *.

The aſſociate ſynod is ſtill more explicit in their approbation of the political conſtitution of Great Britain, in an act paſſed by them, on occaſion of the acceſſion of his preſent Majeſty, on the 16th of April 1761, in which they expreſs themſelves thus, " The ſynod do hereby a- " gree in declaring, that they can yield to none of their " fellow-ſubjects in prizing the civil government under " which they live, as the beſt modelled government " throughout the known world; in reſpect to the me- " mory of our late ſovereign King George II. as one of " the beſt of kings, of the mildeſt adminiſtration, who " rules

* See Formula, Q. 11th.

" ruled over us as the common father of his people; in " thankfulneſs for the peaceable acceſſion of our preſent " ſovereign King George III. to the throne of theſe " kingdoms; in a firm reſolution to ſupport and live " dutifully under his government, in our ſeveral ſtations " and capacities, according to the word of God, and " our received and known principles founded thereon, " to which we are bound by ſolemn covenant; in an " inviolable attachment to the Proteſtant ſucceſſion, in " the illuſtrious family of Hanover; and in a full pur- " poſe ſtill to maintain theſe principles among the peo- " ple under their inſpection."

Upon theſe principles Seceders have hitherto conducted themſelves. It is well known, that when an attack was made upon the conſtitution, by the Pretender and his adherents, in 1745, Seceders, miniſters, and people, to a man, were ſtedfaſt in their adherence to it: and many of them took arms in its defence. I truſt the body of them, whatever may be the caſe with individuals, will be as ready to defend it againſt the rage of popular clamour as againſt the antiquated claims of hereditary right.

But it ſhall be left to themſelves to determine, how far thoſe men act like Seceders, or in agreeableneſs to the principles above expreſſed, who encourage or join themſelves to ſocieties and aſſociations, under whatever ſpecious names, erected and maintained for the purpoſe of oppoſing the meaſures of government, and even of ſubverting the conſtitution. I know this intention is now denied; becauſe they dare no longer avow it. But what elſe could be their deſign? What elſe can it be to this day? Why did they ſend addreſſes of congratulation to the French convention? Why did they exert themſelves to propagate books, in which our conſtitution was held

held up to ridicule, and the exiſtence of it denied? Why did they erect conventions among us, upon the plan of that of France; ſend deputies to them from their different departments; and there, in defiance of the conſtitution, take upon them to tranſact the buſineſs of the nation? That there was a deſign among thoſe, who very falſely call themſelves *the Friends of the People*, to ſubvert the conſtitution, and to change the whole form of the government, is ſo plain, that no diſintereſted perſon has any doubt of it. Nor was it ever denied, unleſs by thoſe who were themſelves concerned in it; and wiſhed to amuſe government, or lull them aſleep by ſuch denials, till their ſcheme ſhould be ripe for execution.

ESSAY IV.

On KINGLY GOVERNMENT, and Hereditary Succeſſion.

ONE principal objection againſt the Britiſh conſtitution is, that we are governed by a king: whereas we are now taught that all kings are tyrants; and that under a monarchial government, however limited, no people can be free. This aſſertion could only proceed from a man, who feeling in himſelf that pride, cruelty, and malignity, which would render him a tyrant if he had power in his hands; and concluding that all men are like himſelf, takes it for granted, that no man can enjoy power without abuſing it. But the aſſertion has been contradicted by the experience of four thouſand years. Will any perſon believe, that David and Solomon, Aſa and Jehoſhaphat, Hezekiah and Joſiah, were all tyrants? Were Numa and Ancus Martius tyrants, Veſpaſian and Titus, Trajan and Antoninus? Many princes of later times might be mentioned, whom ſlander itſelf never accuſed of tyranny, ſuch as Guſtavus Erickſon of Sweden, and his grandſon Guſtavus Adolphus, Henry IV. of France, James I. of Scotland, and many more. Kings are men of like paſſions with others:

thers: and therefore it is not to be wondered at, if there have been fewer good kings than bad ones in the world; becauſe, in all ſtations of life, there are more bad than good men. And the proportion of bad men, who have been kings, is not greater than of thoſe who have been coblers. What tyrant has occupied the throne of Britain, ſince the Revolution? Or what one act of tyranny can malice itſelf impute to our preſent gracious ſovereign?

"But kings," they tell us, "are deſtroyers of man-"kind. They have been the authors of all the wars "that have laid the world deſolate: and peace will ne-"ver be enjoyed, till kings be exterminated." This aſſertion, if true, would go far to end the conteſt. But, unhappily no aſſertion can be more falſe. It is true, that the wars in which kings have been engaged, are more numerous than thoſe which have been managed by republics; becauſe the number of kings in the world has always ſurpaſſed the number of republics, at leaſt in the proportion of ten to one. But republics have, in all ages, been more inclined to war than kings, almoſt in the ſame proportion. Was not Athens a republic, which not only maintained a conſtant war for ages together, againſt neighbouring kings, but had well nigh enſlaved all the other ſtates of Greece, till Sparta, with her two kings, roſe up to oppoſe her? Was not Carthage a republic? And did not ſhe extend her conqueſts, almoſt as far as her trade; ſo as to be, at one time, in poſſeſſion of a great part of Africa, of Spain, of Sicily and of Sardinia, beſides other places? Were there ever any wars more bloody, more obſtinate, or more deſtructive, than thoſe which ſhe waged with Rome, her ſiſter republic? Did ever any kingdom on earth engage in as many wars as Rome did without a-

ny provocation? Was not this the beaſt, dreadful and terrible, and ſtrong exceedingly, having great iron teeth, which devoured the whole earth, brake it in pieces, and ſtamped it with its feet*? To deſcend to later times, did not the Venetian republic, in a ſhort time, raiſe itſelf, by war, from a fiſhing village, to be a powerful ſtate. And, if it were not a diſgrace to all other republics to reckon France among the number, has not France, ſince her convention called her a republic, ſhewed as much of a diſpoſition to war and conqueſt, as ever ſhe did in the days of Lewis XIV. She indeed made a decree, that ſhe was to engage in no war but for her own defence, and ſhe fulfilled it by invading the territories of the Emperor, and attacking Mons and Tournay, before he had either declared war againſt her, or had an army in the field to oppoſe her. Did ſhe not over-run Savoy, while its ſovereign had ſo little thought of war as not to have the veſtige of an army to opppoſe her? Did ſhe not firſt violate the rights of Holland, by her decree for opening the *Scheldt*, and then invade her territories with a powerful army, before Holland had moved a tongue againſt her? Did ſhe not declare war againſt Britain, and ſtop all our ſhips in her ports, before our court had formed any reſolution of making war upon her? So far is it from being true that republican government is more favourable to peace than monarchy, that the ſcope it gives to the ambition of individuals, and the neceſſity that thoſe in power are under of finding employment for that ambition, unavoidably hurries them into wars; and it will not be denied, that ſome of the ſtrongeſt advocates for that ſort of government have attempted to

* Dan. vii. 7.

to prove its ſuperiority to all other forms, by this, that it beſt provides for war †. If the nations of Europe ſhould all diſmiſs their kings, and ſet up a popular government, with a view to ſecure themſelves againſt war; it would be the ſame policy as if the Dutch, in order to drain their marſhes, ſhould break down all their dykes.

" But our king has too much power and influence; " ſo that he over-rules the other branches of the le- " giſlature, and every thing is carried in Parliament, " according to the pleaſure of the court." As a proof of this, we are reminded of a vote paſt in the Houſe of Commons, ſome years ago, " that the influence of the " crown has increaſed, is increaſing, and ought to be " diminiſhed." But, could ſuch a vote have paſſed, if Parliament had been ſuch a tool of the crown as is alledged? Beſides, the influence of the crown is not now the ſame as at the time of that vote. In conſequence of it, two acts of Parliament paſſed, in order to reduce the influence complained of, as low as could be done without hurting the balance of the conſtitution. By the one all perſons holding government contracts, were diſabled from ſitting in the Houſe of Commons; and all officers of the revenue from voting in the election of members of Parliament: and by the other, a number of ſinecure places were aboliſhed, the ſalaries of which amounted to L. 72,368 a year. But, in order to know what weight is in the argument of there being too great power or influence in the Crown, let us take a view of thoſe branches of the prerogative, that are conſidered as moſt exceptionable.

The king has the power of calling, proroguing, and diſſolving

† See Alg. Sydney's diſcourſes on government, ch. ii. ſect. 23.

diſſolving Parliaments. But how can this have any dangerous effects? He muſt call a new Parliament, at leaſt once in ſeven years. And though the law requiring that the Parliament ſhould meet once a year, *if neceſſary*, might be evaded, and has been evaded, under pretence that it was not neceſſary; yet, in the preſent circumſtances, ſuch an evaſion cannot take place: nor is it likely that it ever can, in any time to come; becauſe, while the ſupplies are only granted from year to year, the meeting of Parliament is ſo neceſſary, that the army would be, *ipſo facto*, diſbanded, the intereſt of the national debt would remain unpaid, and the whole buſineſs of government would be at a ſtand, if any year ſhould paſs without a meeting of Parliament.

The king has the power of appointing officers, civil, eccleſiaſtical, and military, and of granting places and penſions; and, by this means, may indirectly bribe members of Parliament, and bring them over to the court ſide. But this part of the prerogative is likewiſe under ſuch regulations, that it cannot eaſily become hurtful; for—1. The moſt important offices are given for life, ſuch as thoſe of the judges, biſhops, and others. Though the king can give them, he cannot take them away. And if once a man has obtained what was the aim of his ambition, his gratitude will hardly influence him to vote, either to the diminution of his own conſequence as a member of the legiſlature, or in oppoſition to his party, or to his conſcience, if he has any. How often have we ſeen a young clergyman in Scotland cringe to a patron for a preſentation: and, as ſoon as he had obtained it, proſecute his benefactor for an augmentation of ſtipend; becauſe he knows, that he cannot recal his gift? Men are not more grateful to kings, than to others who do them a

like

like favour.—2. According to law, no perſon can enjoy a ſeat in Parliament, who is concerned in the management of any tax, impoſed ſince the year 1692; nor any who enjoys an office under the crown, created ſince the year 1705: no more can any commiſſioner of prizes, of the navy or victualling office, nor any comptroller of army accounts, agent for regiments, or clerk in any of the offices of the revenue; nor any who enjoys a penſion from the crown during pleaſure, or for any ſpecified term of years. So that if a member of Parliament accepts any of theſe, he not only loſes his ſeat, but is incapable of being re-elected.—3. If any member accepts any office from the crown, of what kind ſoever it be, unleſs it be an officer in the army or navy accepting a new commiſſion, his ſeat is thereby vacated: and if it be dangerous for him to continue in Parliament, the blame cannot ly upon the crown; but upon the people who chooſe him anew.

Beſides theſe legal proviſions againſt the bad effects of court influence; experience ſhews, that neither offices, nor dignities, nor penſions, are ſufficient to ſtop the mouths of thoſe who are diſpoſed to join the oppoſition. In fact every office in the gift of the Crown operates two ways. They who thirſt for theſe things, hope to obtain them, not oftener by voting for the court, than by roaring againſt it. Theſe bawl out againſt every meaſure of government, good or bad, in hopes that adminiſtration will come up to their price. And after an office has been obtained, they who enjoy it do not on that account ſtick to the court party. How many inſtances have we ſeen of men eating the bread of government, and yet lifting up their heel againſt it? It may be odious to mention names; but plenty of inſtances will occur to every one.

Moreover,

Moreover, every attentive perſon may ſee, and every true friend of his country will ſee it with pleaſure, that when the tide of party runs higheſt, and when the court has the greateſt majority on its ſide, if a meaſure is propoſed, that is manifeſtly contrary to the intereſt of the nation, all the influence of the court is not able to carry it. Thus the Duke of Richmond's Fortification Bill was loſt by a great majority; and ſo was the Scots Militia Bill, though adminiſtration was ſtrengthened by the intereſt of all the Scotch Members. In matters of ſmaller importance, court influence, or attachment to a party, may ſway a majority in either Houſe. But I hope there are ſtill as many Britons in Parliament, of independent fortunes, and independent ſpirits, as will ever be able to prevent any party, whatever their influence may be, from doing any material injury to the country.

" But our king has alſo the power of making peace " and war, and of entering into treaties with foreign " nations: and hence he may involve us in a ruinous " war, and ſubject us to new taxes to defray the ex- " pence; or he may enter into alliances diſgraceful or " expenſive to the nation. And where ſhall we find re- " dreſs?"——True; ſuch powers belong to the king: but if he enter into any war, prejudicial to the nation, he cannot carry it on without money; and money he cannot have, till it is granted by Parliament. Or, if he enter into any treaty, which brings any expence upon the nation, that treaty cannot be carried into effect till the Parliament grant him the requiſite ſum. The Court will, therefore, take care how they enter into any war, or any ſuch treaty, till they have ſecurity that Parliament will ſecond their views: becauſe they well know that the Houſe of Commons, as keepers of the national purſe,

purſe, have it always in their power to defeat their intentions, and expoſe them to ſhame among ſurrounding nations. Yea, they have power to impeach the miniſter who adviſed the pernicious meaſure; and to bring him, if he deſerves it, to the block. Thus the miniſter's ſafety lies in his pleaſing the nation; as he muſt juſtify every meaſure in the Houſe of Commons, in the face of thoſe who want to fill his place, and who exert every talent to expoſe his errors or miſtakes.

Again we are told, that "kings are very expenſive "things. This nation pays no leſs than a million year-"ly to a man, for nothing but what any cobler might "do as well: and all this might be ſaved by ſending "over him and his family to Germany."——They, who ſpeak in this manner, neither know what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm. They labour under two capital miſtakes. 1. That million of money, which is called the *Civil Liſt*, does not all go to the maintenance of the king's family. From it are paid all the ſalaries of the judges, the officers of ſtate, and officers of the houſehold; all the expence incurred either by the reſidence of foreign ambaſſadors at our court, or for maintaining our ambaſſadors abroad;—beſides penſions, ſecret ſervice money; and, in a word, the whole expence of the civil government. Whatever money is laid out by adminiſtration, it muſt be taken from this ſum, unleſs it is otherwiſe expreſsly provided for by Parliament; as well as what goes to the maintenance of the king's family*. It muſt, therefore, be either very ignorant or very wicked in men to cry out of all this expence as incurred

* Blackſtone's Commentaries, vol. 1. p. 331. Encyclopædia Britannica, article CIVIL LIST.

curred by the royal family; and then to cry out of penſions and ſalaries to the ſervants of government, as if all theſe were diſtinct things, when they are all included in this one. The buſineſs of the nation muſt be done: no man is obliged to ſerve her for nought: nay, it is highly reaſonable that her ſervants, like thoſe of private men, be allowed wages, not only in proportion to the weight of their work, but likewiſe to the dignity of their employer, and to the riſk and expence of fitting themſelves for ſituations that are precarious when obtained, and cannot be filled withouut conſiderable talents and accompliſhments; beſides they muſt be enabled to ſupport a degree of ſplendour proportioned to their rank; otherwiſe both themſelves and their offices will fall into contempt. And if this is done, though all the royal family were ſent to Botany Bay, it would be comparatively a ſmall part of this begrudged ſum that the nation would ſave by that means.

2. It is a very great miſtake, that the advantages which the nation derives from royalty are not ſufficient to balance all the expence of maintaining it. Is not the whole executive power lodged in the king's hand? And is not the execution of the laws; the protection of our perſons, liberties, and property; the adminiſtration of juſtice; and the preſervation of the public peace in all the Britiſh dominions,—worth one million yearly?—— It may be ſaid, that the laws could be executed without a king. But no man who underſtands the ſubject will ſay that it could be done to ſuch advantage, or with as much ſafety. Every diviſion of the executive power muſt tend to weaken it. To lodge it in the hands of many would be to give each a power of oppreſſing the people with impunity. By lodging it in one hand, the nation can more eaſily watch its motions, and detect and prevent

prevent every attempt to abuſe it. "One peculiar ex-
"cellence of the Britiſh government, is its having thrown
"into one place the whole maſs of the executive power.
"By this very circumſtance has the *depoſitum* of it been
"rendered ſacred and inexpugnable. By making one
"very great man in the ſtate, has an effectual check
"been put to the pretenſions of all thoſe who would
"otherwiſe ſtrive to become ſuch; and diſorders have
"been prevented, which, in all republics, have brought
"on the ruin of liberty *." Beſides, is it no advantage to us that the king holds the balance between the two Houſes of Parliament; and, while he prevents the nobility from being trampled on by the Commons, effectually prevents the people from being cruſhed by the weight of a powerful ariſtocracy?

Still they rejoin:—"Our crown is hereditary; and
"this an abſurdity ſhocking to common ſenſe. What!
"Are not all men born equal? Or, is one man born
"a king, and all the reſt of the nation born ſlaves?"—
It is very true that all men are born equal; that is, every perſon comes into the world a naked and helpleſs infant, poſſeſſing nothing, and capable to do nothing for himſelf. But is it not as true, that, by the laws of all civilized nations, one is born heir to a great eſtate, and another is heir to nothing but rags and miſery? And why may not a ſimilar law make one man be born heir to a kingdom, while another is born a ſubject? The antiquated claim of *divine hereditary right*, I hope, will never be again revived in Britain. But our crown is rendered hereditary, not only by the ſanction of the national will for more than two centuries paſt, but by

* De Lolme, p. 196, 197.

an expreſs and ſolemn deed of the nation. An act of the legiſlature, paſſed with the general approbation of the people, declared the crown hereditary in the reigning family, upon certain conditions. And that act continued to be approved by the whole nation, excepting a few adherents of the Pretender's divine right; and to be gloried in, as the chief ſecurity of our religion and liberties,—till Thomas Paine taught us to think otherwiſe. That act, like all the other laws of Britain, being eſtabliſhed by the joint authority of KING, LORDS, and COMMONS, has the force of a ſolemn compact, by which all the orders of the ſtate are equally bound. And while the conditions therein ſtipulated continue to be obſerved by the family of Hanover, neither the Parliament, nor the people, have any power to aboliſh or alter it without the king's conſent, more than they have to abrogate every other law that has been paſt by the ſame authority, and to aboliſh the whole conſtitution. If ever theſe conditions ſhall be violated by that family, the contract will be diſſolved, and their hereditary right will ceaſe. The nation will then unite in turning them off the throne; as they have done their predeceſſors. But, till then, whoever ſhall attempt any thing to the prejudice of their right will be juſtly conſidered as traitors to their country; and all ranks in the nation will concur, as in duty bound, in bringing them to puniſhment.

How much advantage has been derived to the nation from this Act of Settlement, ſince it was paſt, on the 12th of June 1700, will be eaſily perceived by every perſon who knows what miſeries have followed, in this and other countries, from a diſputed ſucceſſion, and even from an elective government. How much blood was ſpilt in England during the conteſt between the houſes of York and Lancaſter? What calamities did Scotland ſuffer,

ſuffer, while the crown was diſputed by the families of Baliol and Bruce?—And what has made Poland a ſcene of anarchy and of carnage, for many ages paſt, as often as the death, the ejectment, or the reſignation of her kings, has made a new election neceſſary? The want of ſuch a ſettlement as we have, is the very thing that has reduced one of the moſt powerful and warlike kingdoms of Europe to the neceſſity of ſubmitting to be parcelled out by neighbouring deſpots, without having it in her power to make the leaſt reſiſtance. Of this the Poles are ſo ſenſible, that, by the conſtitution which was voluntarily accepted by king, nobles, and people, a few years ago, their crown was to be hereditary, as ours is. And indeed their object was to obtain a conſtitution as nearly reſembling that of Great Britain as poſſible.

The Prince of Wales is conſidered as heir apparent of the crown of Britain, not on account of any natural difference between him and other men; not becauſe he is deſcended from a race of kings who have reigned ſince the earlieſt accounts of this Iſland;—but becauſe he has been ſo declared by a ſtanding law, a ſolemn deed of the nation. By virtue of the ſame deed, we are born, not his ſlaves, but—heirs to that liberty and peace which it has ſecured to us. In all this, what is there inconſiſtent with reaſon, with common ſenſe, with the rights of men, or even with that natural equality, which, though it may be an object of ſpeculation, can have no actual ſubſiſtence among mankind in a ſocial ſtate.

It has been objected, that, by this hereditary ſucceſſion, it may happen that the nation may be governed by a fool, a tyrant, or an ideot. But he muſt either be a fool, or ſomething worſe, that lays any ſtreſs upon this objection. If, by reaſon of infancy, or any other cauſe, our hereditary king ſhould be diſqualified for the actual exerciſe

exerciſe of government; the law has provided a remedy. The adminiſtration falls into the hands of a regency, in whom the nation may confide, as being appointed by the nation itſelf. If our king ſhould ever happen to be a weak man, the Parliament are his hereditary council; and he will be aſſiſted by all the wiſdom of the nation. If he ſhould even be a man of an arbitrary and tyrannical diſpoſition, the law has cut off the claws of the lion. The fate of the firſt Charles, and the ſecond James, will teach him to reſtrain himſelf within the bounds preſcribed by law. Or if he does not, he breaks the contract; his right to the crown ceaſes; and the nation will provide him a ſucceſſor. Before people decide, with regard to hereditary ſucceſſion, they would need to know more of the matter, than what is to be learned from Paine's invectives. Suppoſe a chief magiſtrate were to be elected by the whole nation, would not that man who knew how to flatter the vanity, and humour the prejudices, of the populace, however profligate his character, be as likely to be choſen, as a man of wiſdom and prudence, free from reſtleſs ambition, and above ſacrificing the public intereſt, to his own, or that of his family? Is it of no conſequence, that he who is to be a king have ſuch an education as may qualify him for the duties of his high ſtation? Does not the limitation of the ſucceſſion to one family tend to prevent our kings from being infected with thoſe little jealouſies, and party connections, which are ſo favourable to ſelfiſhneſs, avarice, and cruelty; and ſo repugnant to that magnanimity, juſtice, and mercy, that ought to diſtinguiſh the man who rules a great nation? Would not the election of a king give much more ſcope to corruption, than that of members of Parliament, or of perſons in any inferior office? Or has ever an executive government been erected

rected or maintained, with ſo little animoſity, diſturbance, or danger to public liberty, as by a limited hereditary monarchy?

Such a hereditary ſucceſſion as we have, is likewiſe agreeable to ſcripture; and is plainly exemplified in that government, which God himſelf ſet up. Though the government in Iſrael was a theocracy, that is, though God himſelf was their king, and therefore might have appointed whom he would for his deputy, without conſulting the people, and actually did ſo in the days of the judges; yet no kings were ever impoſed upon them, without their conſent, nor any but ſuch as themſelves had choſen. Saul was expreſsly choſen by the people *. And though David had been previouſly anointed by Samuel, at the command of God; yet he did not think himſelf authoriſed to take upon him the adminiſtration, even after the death of Saul, till the people had inveſted him with it. Accordingly, he was choſen and anointed king, by the tribe of Judah aſſembled at Hebron †: and over them only he claimed any right to reign, till he was alſo choſen by the people of Iſrael, ſeven years afterwards ‡. And though God had promiſed that the throne ſhould be hereditary in David's line, upon certain conditions; yet this was not conſidered as legally fixing the ſucceſſion, till it was done by a deed of the people. Accordingly, when Solomon died, all Iſrael aſſembled at Shechem, to make Rehoboam king; and when he refuſed to comply with the conditions which they ſtipulated, ten tribes rejected him, and he reigned over two only.

It

* 1 Sam. xii. 12.

† 2 Sam xi. 4.

‡ Chap. v. 1.

It deſerves particular notice, that it is not ſaid, in the hiſtory of that tranſaction, that the tribe of Judah clave to Rehoboam, or followed him; but they *followed the houſe of David* *. From hence it would appear, that after the ten tribes were gone, the people of Judah and Benjamin, juſtly apprehenſive of the renovation of ſuch a ſcene as they had juſt witneſſed, agreed, by a ſolemn national deed, to fix the ſucceſſion in the family of David. Accordingly, we hear no more of their aſſembling again for the choice or inauguration of Rehoboam's ſucceſſors: but the ſon regularly occupied his father's throne, without any further interpoſition of the people; unleſs when the ſucceſſion was interrupted by Athaliah's uſurpation. At any rate, we are ſure, that the ſucceſſion in that line was hereditary: that it was ſo by the appointment of God, and with the conſent of the people: and therefore, that all the ſcurrility, ſpued out by our modern reformers, againſt hereditary ſucceſſion, applies equally to the conſtitution of the kingdom of Judah, as to that of Britain. If the one is inconſiſtent with reaſon, with common ſenſe, or with the rights of man, ſo was the other: Conſequently, God, the Fountain of reaſon, the Creator of man, and the Giver of all his rights, not only ſet up a government among his choſen and beloved people, that was deſtructive of all theſe, but continued to ſupport it for nearly five hundred years!

To take off the force of this argument, we are told, that God gave them this form of government, as a puniſhment; becauſe they rejected him from being their King, and would needs have a king like the other nations: and what was a puniſhment to them can never be

* 1 Kings xii. 20.

be a bleſſing to any other people. In ſupport of this the words of God by the prophet Hoſea, are often quoted: *I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath* *. But it is plain that theſe words were addreſſed to the ten tribes: and all interpreters underſtand them either of Saul, in whom they were literally fulfilled, or elſe of that race of kings, who had reigned in Iſrael, from the time of their revolt from David's family, and from the worſhip of the true God; and whom God was juſt about to take away by the hand of the king of Aſſyria. But until the preſent time, it never yet entered into the mind of any perſon, who had a right publicly to interpret ſcripture, to underſtand theſe words of David or of his family. How could it? In what ſenſe was ever David given in anger? Or how could his family be ſaid to have been taken away in the days of Hoſea, when it continued to reign an hundred and fifty years after? The ſetting up of that family was ever conſidered by the people of God, as an act of ſingular favour, and was celebrated, as ſuch, in their public praiſes †. It may be ſaid, that the people were miſtaken: and that the Queen of Sheba was alſo miſtaken, when ſhe ſaid to Solomon, "Becauſe the Lord thy God loved Iſrael "for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judge-"ment and juſtice ‡!" But was the ſpirit of God miſtaken, when he indited the pſalms referred to in the margin? Or has the church, from the days of David to the preſent time, been publicly praiſing God, for ſetting up and maintaining among his people, a government inconſiſtent with reaſon and common ſenſe!

Chriſtians

* Hoſea xiii. 11.

† Pſ. lxviii. 70. 71. Pſ. cxxxii. 11. 12.

‡ 1 Kings x. 9.

Chriſtians ſhould alſo conſider, that in thoſe injunctions, which are laid upon us in the New Teſtament, to be ſubject to the higher powers, kings are expreſsly mentioned: that we are ſpecially called to pray, and even to give thanks for kings: That Jeſus Chriſt himſelf is a king, though his kingdom is not of this world: and that if the kingly office among men had been a thing diſagreeable to God, or to reaſon, the ſon of God had never been diſgraced with the name, or with the office. Chriſt is even a hereditary king, ſitting "on the throne "of his father David, to order it, and to eſtabliſh it, "from henceforth and for ever." They ſhould conſider, that there are many promiſes and prophecies, contained in the word of God, and which we hope to ſee accompliſhed in due time, more fully than they have ever yet been, that plainly and neceſſarily ſuppoſe the continued exiſtence of kings, and their activity in promoting the intereſts of Chriſt. "Kings ſhall be nurſ-"ing fathers, and their queens nurſing mothers" to the church. "All kings ſhall bow down before Chriſt, "and all nations ſhall ſerve him. The kings of the "earth ſhall bring their glory and honour into" the new Jeruſalem *. In anſwer, therefore, to thoſe who expreſs their hopes, that monarchy ſhall ſoon be aboliſhed, in all the nations of the world, we rejoice in declaring our firm aſſurance, that while Chriſt has a church upon earth, and while there are nations to ſerve him, there ſhall alſo be kings to bow down, and they ſhall bow down before him.

Theſe arguments from ſcripture, are ſo plain and concluſive, in favours of limited royalty, that Mr Paine himſelf

* See Iſa. xlix. 23. Pſal. lxxii. 11. Rev. xxi. 24.

himſelf, in various parts of his writings, ſeems plainly enough to hint, that, along with kingly government, the Scriptures alſo muſt be extruded. And now, where his principles are reduced to practice, his colleagues of the rump convention, have found it neceſſary, in order to juſtify their abolition of kings, to aboliſh Chriſtianity too. What elſe could be their deſign, in aboliſhing the Chriſtian ſabbath, which is appointed by God, not only as a weekly commemoration of his two great works, of creation and redemption, but likewiſe as the diſtinguiſhing badge of his religion: or, as the Scriptures expreſs it, a *ſign between* him and his people *for ever?* Yet theſe are the men, and this is the conſtitution, which ſome men in Britain, and even ſome who pretend to be zealous Chriſtians, wiſh to imitate. *My ſoul, come not thou into their ſecrets; unto their aſſembly, mine honour, be not thou united!*

ESSAY V.

On Parliamentary Representation and Reform.

ONE of the principal advantages of the Britiſh conſtitution lies in this, that one branch of the legiſlature is compoſed of repreſentatives choſen by the people. Yet there is nothing that is more complained of by diſcontented perſons, than the preſent ſtate of that repreſentation. And the mode now introduced into France is extolled, as incomparably better than ours. But a very moderate degree of attention will convince any one, that our ſyſtem of repreſentation is incomparably better than theirs. To mention only two particulars:

1. In France, by the conſtitution of 1791, no perſon was to have a voice in the primary aſſemblies, but ſuch as contributed directly towards the expences of the ſtate, the value of three days labour; nor any menial ſervant; nor any that was not enrolled in the national guards.—And no perſon could vote for the national repreſentatives, in the electoral aſſemblies, who was not valued, on the rolls of contribution, at an yearly revenue, equal, at leaſt, to 150 days labour. But in England, every perſon

perſon is entitled to vote for a member of Parliament, who enjoys a free income of forty ſhillings a year, which is not earned by ſervitude: and this right is not forfeited by his receiving wages. Many electors in England pay nothing directly to Government: and what every one pays indirectly, it is impoſſible to determine. Thus it is plain, that in England, many are electors, who, in France, could have no place, even in a primary aſſembly: and many more, who could not be choſen electors*.

2. In France, according to the above mentioned conſtitution, he who was to repreſent the department in the legiſlature, might be choſen, contrary to the mind of a great majority of the active citizens, who were entitled to vote in their primary aſſemblies: which may be clearly illuſtrated thus. In France, every 100 active citizens were to chooſe an elector. Theſe electors were to meet in what was to be called an electoral aſſembly; where the repreſentative of the department was to be choſen. Now, ſuppoſe this mode adopted in Britain, and ſuppoſe the number of active citizens in any county, amounts to ten thouſand; every hundred of theſe is to chooſe one elector, making an hundred in all. Theſe hundred electors are to chooſe one to repreſent the county in Parliament, or, if you pleaſe, in convention. Suppoſe the nation, as it uſually is, divided into two parties; and, for diſtinction's ſake, let Mr Pitt be at the head of one party, and Mr Fox at the head of the other. Of the hundred primary aſſemblies, conſiſting of

* How theſe matters ſtand in that thing called a conſtitution, which the preſent convention have framed, I know not; having never ſeen more of it than what was exhibited in public news-papers.

of a hundred active citizens each, fifty-one chooſe electors of Mr Pitt's faction, by a majority of ſixty to forty, at a medium. It is plain, that among all theſe, there are in Mr Pitt's intereſt, *three thouſand and ſixty* active citizens, and *two thouſand and forty* in that of Mr Fox. The other *forty-nine* aſſemblies chooſe electors of Mr Fox's party, by a majority of *eighty* to *twenty*, one with another: here there muſt be *three thouſand nine hundred and twenty* citizens in favours of Mr Fox, and only *nine hundred* and *eighty* for Mr Pitt.—Thus, in the whole county, Mr Fox has *five thouſand nine hundred and ſixty* on his ſide, while Mr Pitt has only *four thouſand and forty*: yet the election is carried in Mr Pitt's favours, by *fifty-one* againſt *forty-nine*. Thus almoſt three fifths of the active citizens are really againſt the perſon who is choſen to repreſent them: but, among us, whoever the electors be, we are ſure that their repreſentatives are choſen by the majority of them.

Various other miſtakes people labour under, with regard to the affair of repreſentation, which we ſhall endeavour to rectify, by the following obſervations.

I. A man may be truly, fairly, and equitably repreſented, by one whom he has never choſen for that purpoſe. Every member of the Houſe of Commons repreſents thoſe who voted againſt him, as well as them who voted for him. Yea, whenever a man is choſen, he ceaſes to be a repreſentative of that city or county only, by which he was choſen: and becomes a repreſentative of the Britiſh people at large. And every individual among that people is repreſented, not by any particular member of Parliament only; but by the whole houſe. This doctrine has been ſupported by the beſt writers on

our

our government, and by thoſe moſt favourable to liberty *.

There are various ways, in which a true and juſt repreſentation may be conſtituted, without the choice of thoſe who are repreſented. Every man has a natural right to repreſent his own family, and even his poſterity, to the lateſt generations. As this right is founded in the law of nature, it is recognized by the municipal laws of all civilized nations. And every man exerciſes it in every civil tranſaction. If I enter into any contract, and do not live to fulfill it, my obligation is binding upon my heirs and executors to the end of time; becauſe I truly repreſented them in that tranſaction, though it took place long before they were born. Under the feudal ſyſtem, every great man was the repreſentative of his vaſſals and dependents; and thus the people in Britain were, in a ſort, repreſented in Parliament, before a choice of repreſentatives was known By the Britiſh conſtitution, the king is the repreſentative of the whole nation. It is the majeſty and authority of the nation, that is collected, and centers in his perſon. It is in the name of the whole nation, that he tranſacts with foreign powers, whether in making peace or war, or alliances of any kind: and as a proof that every individual is included in this repreſentation, every one in the nation is as much bound by the king's tranſactions as himſelf is. Yet I need not add, that there is not a perſon now alive in the nation, that had any active hand in chooſing him to be king.

To Chriſtians we may addreſs an argument of ſtill greater weight, in ſupport of repreſentation, where there has

* Blackſtone's Comm. v. 1. p. 159.

has been no election. Every one who adheres to the Proteſtant doctrine, as laid down in the ſtandards, either of the church of England, or of the church of Scotland, muſt believe, that, by a tranſaction co-eval with the world itſelf, Adam was conſtituted the federal repreſentative of all his poſterity: and that, by a ſimilar tranſaction, prior to that date, the ſon of God became the repreſentative of his ſpiritual ſeed. In neither of theſe caſes could the perſons repreſented have any choice; becauſe none of them had any Being. And therefore, if the choice of conſtituents is of abſolute neceſſity, both theſe tranſactions muſt have been unjuſt. Some of thoſe who are moſt zealous, in favour of our new ſyſtem of politics, will be perfectly aware of the force of this argument: and, to avoid it, deny that any ſuch tranſaction ever exiſted. That they may be conſiſtent with themſelves, they go further, and deny the divinity of Chriſt, his vicarious ſatisfaction, the divine inſpiration of the holy Scriptures, and all the moſt important articles of the Chriſtian faith. Yet theſe are the men, with whom ſome well-meaning Calviniſts aſſociate themſelves, in our preſent diſputes; without being aware, that if they adhere to Dr Prieſtley's political creed, they muſt likewiſe adopt his religious ſyſtem, in order to be conſiſtent with themſelves.

II. It follows from what has been ſaid, that a man may be rightfully and equitably bound, to obey laws, in the making of which he never had any ſhare, either by himſelf, or by any whom he had choſen to repreſent him. However plauſible, in point of theory, that maxim be, that men cannot be bound by any laws, to the making of which they have not given their conſent, by themſelves or their choſen repreſentatives; it is a maxim, that, ſo far as ever I could learn, was never heard of,

of, till after the commencement of our diſputes with the Colonies in America. It was never reduced to practice, before that time, nor ſince; in Britain, nor in America, nor in France, nor in any other part of the world. I may venture to ſay, that it never will be reduced to practice; becauſe I am abſolutely ſure it never can. Muſt not every man, in every country, be ſubject to laws that were made before he was born, or capable to chooſe a repreſentative? Are not the poor, who can contribute nothing to the ſupport of government, ſubject to the laws, as well as the rich? And is not the protection of the laws more neceſſary to thoſe, than to theſe? Are not minors ſubject to the laws, as well as perſons come to age? Above all, are not all women members of ſociety, ſubject to the laws of their country, and contributing to the ſupport of government, directly or indirectly? Are they not entitled to all the unalienable rights of human creatures, as well as men? How comes it, then, that in ſuch an age of gallantry, no man appears for the right of the ladies to chooſe their repreſentatives, to ſit in legiſlative aſſemblies?—In a word, if ever the above maxim is put in practice, it muſt be in a place, where all minors, all women, and even all gipſies and ſturdy beggars, are allowed to vote in the choice of repreſentatives. And, if this is one of the natural and impreſcriptible rights of man, two thirds of the human ſpecies muſt be for ever deprived of it.

When the ſcriptures ſo frequently injoin ſubjection to the powers that be, both in the Old Teſtament and in the New, can any man believe, that they only require obedience to ſuch laws as have been made, either by ourſelves or our repreſentatives? Had the captive Jews any repreſentatives, in the Chaldean, or the Perſian legiſlature? Had the Jews in our Saviour's days, or the Chriſtians

Chriſtians of the diſperſion, when Peter wrote, any repreſentatives in the Roman ſenate, or any voice in the aſſemblies of that people? Rather, had they any vote in the choice of the Emperor; who, by that time, was become the ſole legiſlator of the Roman world? Or do theſe paſſages only bind us to ſubjection to ſuch a government, as never yet exiſted; and, in the nature of things, never can? A new proof, this, that the total rejection of the ſcriptures, and the abolition of Chriſtianity, muſt be a branch of our new political ſyſtem, in order to make it hang together.

III. It is very certain, that there never was a time, as far back as hiſtory can be traced, when all the inhabitants of Britain, or of either of the two united kingdoms, were conſidered as having a right to vote, in the choice of repreſentatives, to ſit in Parliament. It is well known, that though Parliaments are of a very old date, both in England and Scotland, parliamentary repreſentation is not ſo. At what time ſoever the feudal ſyſtem was introduced in Britain, it is agreed, that, according to it, all the King's tenants *in capite*, i. e. all that held lands immediately of the crown, were entitled to a ſeat in Parliament, and none elſe. This was ſo far from being conſidered as a privilege, by the proprietors of ſmall eſtates, that it was reckoned an intolerable burden. After ſundry efforts to compel their attendance, they were allowed to be abſent, upon condition of ſending two or more from each county, to repreſent them. When this regulation was introduced in England, is uncertain; owing to the loſs of their records: but it ſeems to be agreed that it was not before the latter end of the reign of King John, who died in 1216. With regard to Scotland, we can ſpeak with more certainty. James I. had an act paſt, in the year

1425.

1425, requiring the perſonal attendance of all free-holders. But this being found ineffectual, another act was paſt, in 1427, by which the ſmall barons were exempted, upon condition of ſending two or more wiſe men, out of every ſhire, to repreſent them: yet ſtill they had a right to attend in perſon, if they pleaſed. After all, few of them attended, either by themſelves or repreſentatives, till the year 1587, when James VI. with much difficulty, got the act of 1427 revived. And it is only from that time, that there has been a regular attendance of county repreſentatives in Scotland.

When the repreſentatives of burroughs were introduced into Parliament is more uncertain. It appears to have been ſooner than the repreſentatives of counties were introduced. But this is certain, that burroughs, as well as individuals, were obliged to give attendance, as being the king's tenants. And the only reaſon of their being allowed to ſend repreſentatives, was, that it would have been an intolerable hardſhip, to require the attendance of all the members of the corporation. It ſhall only be further obſerved, on this head, that the right of election in counties, ſtands upon a very different footing in England, from what it does in Scotland; though both were originally the ſame. It would ſerve little purpoſe to trace the various ſteps, by which this difference was introduced. With us, no perſon has a right to vote in ſuch elections, unleſs he holds lands of the crown, either in property or ſuperiority, amounting either to forty ſhillings of old extent, or to L. 400 Scots of valued rent: whereas, beyond the border, every perſon is an elector, who poſſeſſes property, whether real or perſonal, to the value of forty ſhillings ſterling yearly; whether he holds of the king or a ſubject, provided he does not earn it by actual ſervitude.

When people talk of a reform in the repreſentation of the people, it conveys the idea, of reſtoring the conſtitution to the ſame ſtate in which it is ſuppoſed to have been, before the introduction of certain corruptions, which they propoſe to have remedied. Hence many people, who have not had opportunities of better information, take it for granted, that there was a time, when all the people were allowed to vote in the choice of the national repreſentatives: and that this privilege has, ſomehow, been wreſted from them. And deſigning men find their account in foſtering their perſuaſion. But nothing can be more falſe. From the above ſtatement, it is manifeſt, that there never was a time, when a greater number of perſons were allowed to vote in ſuch elections. Of all the changes that have taken place in our conſtitution, for many centuries back, I do not recollect one, that has not been favourable to the people. The truth is, our conſtitution, from being exactly ſimilar to thoſe of other nations in Europe, where the feudal ſyſtem prevailed, has gradually riſen to its preſent happy ſtate; through a variety of changes, all of which have been owing to the ſucceſsful ſtruggles of the ſubjects, in behalf of their rights and liberties: whereby we are become the envy of all neighbouring nations.

I know but of one inſtance, that is condeſcended upon, of degeneracy in the ſtate of our repreſentation. It is in the caſe of the rotten burroughs, as they are called. Certain towns, that were once wealthy and populous, are now fallen into decay; ſo that ſome of them have ſcarcely the appearance of country villages. Yet they continue to ſend members to Parliament, as before. By this means, a good number of our members of Parliament are choſen by a few perſons; while many

many thriving and populous towns ſend no repreſentatives at all. This may be, in ſome degree, a real grievance: and, in due time I hope, a remedy may be provided. But there are various conſiderations, which, if duly attended to, might ſerve to allay the clamour that has been raiſed about it. 1. The change in the ſtate of thoſe towns is not owing to government; but has gradually come about, in the courſe of Divine Providence. Trade and manufactures, after flouriſhing, for a while, in one place, have emigrated to another; and thus one town has fallen into decay, and another has riſen, in its ſtead. Government could not prevent this; nor would it have been proper to attempt it. 2. Theſe burroughs, rotten as they are, have been long poſſeſſed of the privilege of ſending members to Parliament: it is ſecured to them by charter: and it deſerves conſideration, how far it would be juſt to deprive them of it, without their own conſent; or without a ſuitable compenſation. 3. Thoſe towns that have lately riſen to opulence, and ſend no members to Parliament, are not unrepreſented. Every perſon in thoſe towns, that is worth forty ſhillings yearly, has a vote for the county members. 4. Whatever complaints the people of England may have on this head, we in Scotland have little ground for any. None of theſe rotten burroughs are on our ſide the Tweed: and our populous manufacturing towns that have no vote in elections, are yet but few.

IV. If it were practicable, that all the people, of every rank in Britain, ſhould have an equal voice in the choice of the national repreſentatives, it would not be juſt. This will be thought a bold aſſertion; but it admits of an eaſy proof. All the objects of legiſlation may be comprehended under theſe three, *life*, *liberty*, and *property*: and every good law is intended for the ſecurity

curity of one or other of theſe. With regard to the two firſt, mankind are upon a level. And if our Parliament were only to make laws relative to theſe, every man would have an equal right to chooſe repreſentatives. But, in making laws reſpecting property, reaſon dictates, that every man's influence ſhould be in proportion to the property he poſſeſſes. And as land is the moſt fixed kind of property, and the radical ſource of national wealth, it is highly reaſonable, that landholders ſhould have a principal concern in the making of ſuch laws. Now, every one ſees, that for one law that merely reſpects life or liberty, ten laws are paſt for the ſecurity or regulation of property: it is neceſſary that it ſhould be ſo. And therefore juſtice requires that a man of property, eſpecially of landed property, ſhould have ten votes, in the choice of legiſlators, where a man of no property has but one. Of this the French national aſſembly were ſenſible; and accordingly attached two thirds of their repreſentatives to the property, and only one third to the population. A man, whoſe mind is not warped with prejudice, nor heated with enthuſiaſm, however zealous he is for his own rights as a man, can allow to others thoſe rights that are connected with that ſtation in life, which Providence has allotted them.

V. Suppoſing that a more equal repreſentation of the people could be ever ſo eaſily obtained, it would not be productive of thoſe advantages, to perſons in the lower ranks of life, that they are taught to expect from it: and it would produce inconveniencies, of which they are not aware. I do not mean to ſtate myſelf an enemy to reform, either in this reſpect, or in reſpect of ſhortening the duration of Parliaments. Perhaps both might be of advantage to the nation upon the whole. But I am perſuaded,

perſuaded, that if advantages are balanced with diſadvantages, and into the latter ſcale are laid the difficulties, that every thinking perſon muſt ſee in the way of accompliſhing ſuch a reform, even though all parties were alike friendly to it, and the danger that might ariſe from any alteration in our conſtitution, people's zeal in that cauſe will be very much cooled. To mention a few inſtances.

I. This reform would neither prevent nor diminiſh that bribery and corruption, which are too often practiced at elections. It would have the contrary effect. For proof of this we may appeal to facts. In the counties of Scotland there are much fewer electors, in proportion, that in thoſe in England: yet there are no elections in Britain, where there is ſo little bribery and corruption, or ſo little riot and diſſipation as in thoſe of the Scottiſh counties. But let us ſuppoſe our reform obtained, and every man in the county made an elector, would this continue to be the caſe? Suppoſe the number of electors, in any county, is now an hundred: ſuppoſe that after the reform, they ſhall amount to twenty thouſand; and ſuppoſe them to be all alike honeſt: ſtill it would be much eaſier to bribe a majority of the twenty thouſand, than it is to bribe a majority of the hundred. Our preſent electors are men of independent fortunes: and, if they were to be ſold, would diſdain to take a ſmall bribe. No man would dare to offer them leſs than L. 500 a piece, one with another. And therefore, to bribe fifty-one of the hundred, would coſt him L. 25500. But in the other caſe, there would be no occaſion to bribe gentlemen. A majority of poor labourers and mechanics might be found, to whom twenty ſhillings would be a greater object than L. 500 is to our preſent electors. And therefore one might bribe a majority

majority of the twenty thouſand, by expending only L. 10001.—The truth is, it will not be eaſy to find a remedy for corruption, till we can find electors that will take no bribe. And ſurely the leſs they need it, the leſs temptation they have to take it. It is not candidates that are moſt to blame, when a ſeat is obtained in this way; but electors. No man can be ſuppoſed as willing to give away money, as another may be to receive it. And the only reaſon why gentlemen offer bribes, is becauſe they ſee a probability of obtaining a ſeat in that way, and in no other.

It is ſaid, that the court is the ſource of corruption: and that candidates hope to refund themſelves, by places, penſions, or bribes, for all that they expend in corrupting their electors. It may eaſily be believed that he who buys a people will ſell them again: and every corrupt member of Parliament hopes to refund himſelf, juſt as every corrupt elector hopes to better his fortune by the bribe he receives. But it is more than ten to one that both are diſappointed. For one elector that is enriched by ſelling his vote, ten are reduced to poverty by truſting to ſuch a reſource: and for one member of Parliament that has his expences refunded, by places, penſions, or otherwiſe, there are ten whoſe eſtates and families feel the contrary, for ſundry generations. There is no doubt but a corrupt court will rather buy off a member from the oppoſition, than loſe a favourite meaſure: and there is as little doubt, that an unprincipled candidate will rather bribe his electors than loſe his ſeat. But if members of Parliament were honeſt, no bribe would influence them to vote againſt their judgement: and if electors were conſcientious, they would give their vote to no man who ſhould offer them a bribe. As ſoon as this is found to be the caſe, both courts

courts and candidates will keep their money in their pockets. Thus it appears, that, though neither the court nor the members of Parliament are innocent, the principal blame lies upon electors; as the guilt of ſin lies chiefly, not upon Satan who tempts to it, but on the ſinner who yields to the temptation. And if every temptation was to coſt him ten thouſand pounds, any other than Satan would ſoon ceaſe to tempt, if ſinners would ceaſe to comply.

If the number of electors were increaſed, there would, no doubt, be among them a greater number of honeſt men; but there would be a greater number of rogues too: for I have never yet obſerved, that there was a greater proportion of morally honeſt men, in the loweſt ranks of life, than among their ſuperiors. And it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, that they who need money moſt, will be moſt averſe to take it. It may rather be ſuſpected that many of thoſe who now make ſuch a buſtle, about a more equal repreſentation of the people, are men grieved to ſee themſelves out of the way of receiving a ſhare of what they think is to be had at elections: and wiſh to have a vote, only that they may have it in their power to ſell it to the higheſt bidder.

Even though we had a new Parliament every year or every three years, this would have no effect in preventing bribery. Triennial Parliaments have been tried: and perhaps the nation might have ſuffered no inconvenience from their continuance. But neither do I know any great inconvenience that has ariſen from their being made ſeptennial. One reaſon given for the change was, that gentlemen were hurt, by the expence of ſuch frequent elections: a certain proof that they had their electors to bribe then as well as now. And ſurely an election every three years would not give leſs occaſion to bribery,

bribery, than one in ſeven. It would, indeed, give an opportunity to a greater number of gentlemen to ruin themſelves, by ſetting up for members of Parliament: or the ſame gentleman might do it in leſs than half the time. It would procure, to corrupt electors, ſeven bribes in 21 years, inſtead of three: inſtead of nine days of riot and diſſipation, in that ſpace of time, the people might expect one and twenty. And thoſe habits of drunkenneſs, idleneſs, perjury, and all kinds of vice, that are contracted at elections, would gather more than double ſtrength in the ſame time. Were our elections annual, theſe conſequences would follow in a threefold proportion. To ſome men theſe may be deſirable things: but ſurely ſuch men are not the fitteſt to regulate the government of nations.

Bribery and corruption are undoubtedly crying evils: and every habile method ſhould be taken to aboliſh them. Many good laws have been made for that purpoſe; and many ſevere puniſhments have been inflicted upon thoſe who have been found to tranſgreſs them. But ſtill the ingenuity of wicked men has found methods to evade them. If it could be found practicable to aboliſh all canvaſſing for votes, it would be the beſt mean of preventing bribery. What if an act of Parliament ſhould paſs, declaring every man incapable of a ſeat in the Houſe of Commons, who ſhould be proved to have declared himſelf a candidate, either in public or in private, till he did it publicly, on the huſtings, in the day of election? By this means no man would have it in his power, either to give or to receive a bribe. Some would, no doubt, be diſappointed, who would wiſh to have a ſeat; but they would keep their money. And I am perſuaded, neither town nor county in Britain would find themſelves at a loſs, for men both willing and qualified

lified to accept ſuch a truſt, when it ſhould be voluntarily offered them.

2. This propoſed reform would give no ſecurity to the people, that the proceedings of Parliament would be more agreeable to their wiſhes. Our repreſentatives are not, like thoſe of the ſtates of Holland, confined to a bare declaration of the mind of their conſtituents. If they were, they would have nothing to do in Parliament, but to vote as they had been inſtructed: Parliament could deliberate about nothing; but it behoved every bill that was to be brought into the Houſe of Commons, firſt to be diſcuſſed in a public meeting of the electors, in every town and county in Britain. What a dead weight this would hang upon the wheels of government, every perſon of common underſtanding muſt ſee. But with us, when a man is choſen a member of Parliament, neither he nor his conſtituents know what bills are to be brought in, nor what arguments are to be uſed, for or againſt any of them. His electors can therefore give him no inſtructions how he is to vote in any cauſe; nor is he bound to follow them if they do. He is to follow the dictates of his own judgement and conſcience. And whether he is choſen by many or by few, whether choſen every year, or every ſeven years, his judgement is neither more nor leſs likely to coincide with the judgement of the multitude. This, by the way, ſhews what we ought to think of thoſe men, who, in order to obtain their election, cajole their conſtituents with promiſes to follow their inſtructions. The moſt favourable opinion we can have of them is, that they make ſuch promiſes with a fixed reſolution to break them; for unleſs this is the caſe, they muſt reſolve never to pay any regard to their own conſcience or judgement.

3. This reform could have no tendency to reduce our taxes, nor to prevent our entering into new wars, by which our burdens may be increaſed. With regard to preſent taxes, I ſhall ſpeak more fully hereafter. With regard to war; if the nation were threatened by a foreign enemy, if any neighbouring nation ſhould cramp our trade, or otherwiſe injure or inſult us, I am perſuaded the people of Britain have more ſpirit than to ſuffer it without defending themſelves. Suppoſing the body of the people averſe to war, it is plain from what has been ſaid, that this reform gives no additional ſecurity, that Parliament will be of the ſame mind. But every one who knows any thing of our hiſtory muſt have perceived, that the people have always been as much inclined to war as either Court or Parliament. The wars, in the days of King William and Queen Anne, were undoubtedly popular. Nor was there ever any meaſure of adminiſtration, ſince the revolution, more unpopular than the peace in the latter end of Queen Anne's reign. Yet, by theſe wars the foundation of the ſyſtem of national debt was laid. The war which terminated in the year 1763, was undoubtedly the war of the people: and, though the peace of that year was the moſt honourable and advantageous to Britain, of any that ever ſhe entered into, it may well be remembered how much it was blamed by the people. Indeed, if all the people in Britain could be made, inſtead of electors, members of Parliament, there is much reaſon to think that we would be engaged in more wars than ever.

4. Experience ſhews that we who have no vote in chooſing members of Parliament, ſuffer no inconvenience on that account: and we may be well aſſured, that if we could obtain a vote, it would be of no ſolid advantage to us. The town of Jedburgh has a vote, and the

town

town of Hawick has none. Are the people of Hawick ſubject to any oppreſſive laws, from which they of Jedburgh are free? Are trade, manufactures, or any uſeful improvement in a more flouriſhing ſtate *there* than *here*? Or what have we to complain of, that does not ly equally heavy upon *them*? On the contrary, is it not manifeſt, through all Britain, that thoſe towns that have no concern in elections, have riſen to opulence, and are riſing apace, while many of our Parliament burroughs are lolling in indolence, ſtrutting in pride, and ſinking into inſignificance? Sheffield, Birmingham, Mancheſter, Paiſley, permit me to add, Hawick, and Galaſhiels are inſtances of the former: inſtances of the latter are too common to require ſpecification. Perhaps other cauſes may concur, in producing this effect; but I am perſuaded it is not a little furthered by the exemption of thoſe towns from the hurry and buſtle, the riot and diſſipation, the corruption, perjury, and chicanery, that too frequently attend elections. Should we in this town, for inſtance, ever obtain a vote in elections, it could not better our condition. We might indeed have an opportunity of ſpending a week or two, once in ſeven years, in drunkenneſs and debauchery, without much expence to ourſelves. We might have canvaſſing and cajoling, and ſwearing and bribing among us, as our neighbours have, on every ſuch occaſion. Perhaps we might, now and then, have the pleaſure of ſeeing our magiſtrates degraded, our privileges ſuſpended, and commiſſioners appointed by a court of juſtice, to manage our public funds for ſeven years; as a puniſhment for our corruption. Our people, who now quietly mind their own buſineſs, and, by honeſt induſtry make a decent proviſion for their families, would acquire habits of idleneſs and vice. Our trade and manufactures,

nufactures would decline apace; and we would ſoon be remarkable for nothing, but poverty and pride. Unleſs we really wiſh for ſuch a change, we had much better content ourſelves as we are.

5. Beſides all this, we in Scotland ſhould conſider, that if any advantage is to be derived from a reform in parliament, we could not enjoy an equal ſhare of it. We are limited by the Union, to forty-five members in the Houſe of Commons. Suppoſing, as has been propoſed, that one hundred more members were added to that houſe, our proportion of theſe would be no more than eight. And what advantage would we gain, by having eight more noſes to ſhew? Perhaps we may be for breaking the Union, in hope of ſending more repreſentatives to Parliament; as, now a days, little regard is paid to treaties entered into by our forefathers; but how do we know that our Engliſh brethren will be equally willing to break it in this article? Perhaps we only want an increaſe of the number of electors, not of repreſentatives; but what would that do for us? Is there any reaſon to think, that they who ſhould be choſen by the many, would be more worthy of the truſt, or would diſcharge it better, than they who have heretofore been choſen by the few? In Scotland, a much ſmaller proportion of the people are electors than in England: but has there been, ſince the Union, a ſmaller proportion of honeſt men, and friends to their country, among the Scots, than among the Engliſh members?

Upon the whole, the principal thing to be attended to, in the matter of repreſentation is, that the members of the Houſe of Commons, being choſen from among the people, ſhould never have an intereſt oppoſite to theirs; not have it in their power to aggrandize or enrich themſelves at their expence. While they can make no laws, that ſhall not affect themſelves, as much as

their

their fellow ſubjects, it is comparatively of very ſmall importance, who their electors be. They will always be attentive to the intereſts of the people, and will oppoſe every oppreſſive law, for their own ſakes.

6. Suppoſing the propoſed reform to be both proper and neceſſary, this is ſurely no time for driving ſuch a meaſure. The nation is engaged in war; the legiſlature, as well as adminiſtration muſt have their attention engaged to that, and other matters of preſent neceſſity. And they cannot have ſuch leiſure to deliberate upon the buſineſs of reform, as the importance of the affair would require. Things may appear eaſy in theory, which are found very difficult, when we come to reduce them to practice. And, as no plan of reform has yet been propoſed, by our *Friends of the People*, it is impoſſible for them to foreſee what difficulties may occur, either in the formation of the plan, or in the execution of it: more eſpecially as few of them have ever had an opportunity to know much about affairs of ſtate. How many, for inſtance, are to be added, to the number of our repreſentatives? Who are to have a right to be electors? What number of people are to ſend a member to Parliament; or how ſhall the numbers, at each election be aſcertained; as they are always fluctuating? What proportion of the repreſentation ſhall be attached to the ſoil; what to property, and what to population? And how are theſe differences to be aſcertained? How ſhall the proportion between England and Scotland be fixed to mutual ſatisfaction? What compenſation ſhall be given to our rotten burroughs, for the loſs of their privileges, or to our freeholders in Scotland, for dividing their rights with the multitude? Above all, how ſhall the balance of our conſtitution be preſerved; and what ſecurity ſhall we have, that by looſing a few pins, we ſhall not bring down the whole fabric about our ears?

ears? Surely all theſe, and many other difficulties that might occur, would require more deliberation, than can be beſtowed upon them at the preſent criſis.

Neither can it be diſſembled, that the preſent ſtate of the country is very unfavourable to ſuch an attempt. The minds of men are now as much divided about political ſubjects, as they have long been about matters of religion. Some are for a reform, and others againſt it. Some will have it now, and others at a more convenient time. Some will have royalty aboliſhed, and all titles of honour; and ſome will be ſatisfied with a more equal repreſentation in the Houſe of Commons. Some will have annual Parliaments, and ſome wiſh them only triennial. Some cry out of one thing, and ſome of another: every one complains moſt loudly of what bears hardeſt upon himſelf. And perhaps our reformers themſelves would not eaſily agree among themſelves, as to what degree of reformation ſhould be adopted.

But what, above all other things, renders this attempt unſeaſonable at this time, is, that they who are moſt clamorous for a reform, only wiſh for it as a ſtep towards the total overthrow of our conſtitution, and the reducing to practice the whole ſyſtem diſſeminated by Thomas Paine and his followers. Charity obliges us to think, that there are many who are prevailed with, in the ſimplicity of their hearts, to join the cry for reform, who would abhor the thoughts of deſtroying the conſtitution. But is there any doubt that the leaders of our new aſſociations, adopted Paine's principles without reſerve, and avowed themſelves advocates for a total revolution, till they found government in earneſt to puniſh the ſeditious? And if they durſt, would they not be as loud ſtill for a revolution, as they now are for a reform? They hope, that if a reform to their mind could

could be obtained, a few more men might be got into Parliament, of their own kidney; and then they would find it eaſier to execute the reſt of their plan. We have a few atheiſts, murderers, and pick-pockets; a few diſcontented, ambitious, and turbulent men in Britain, as well as in other nations. Theſe men ſee what ſucceſs their brethren elſewhere have had, in worming themſelves into power, in overturning all government and all religion, in deſtroying liberty, property, and perſonal ſecurity, and in bringing to the guillotine all who were objects of their emulation or reſentment. Their ambition is hereby ſet on fire. They long to taſte the ſweets of arbitrary power: and they do not yet deſpair of turning this land of liberty into another ſcene of confuſion, blood, and horror, for that purpoſe. While ſuch hopes are entertained, is this a time to talk of reform?

7. If this reform were both neceſſary and ſeaſonable, the methods taken to obtain it are far from being warrantable. They are pregnant with miſchief. To form ſocieties or aſſociations, in different parts of the united kingdom, under whatever deſignation,—to chooſe deputies in theſe ſocieties,—of theſe deputies, together with others from a neighbouring kingdom, to erect a convention,—and in that convention to diſcuſs the buſineſs of the nation at large, and concert meaſures, in avowed oppoſition to the conſtituted authorities;—what is all this, but to ſet up a government within a government? Do not theſe men uſurp the authority of parliament; and practically declare, that if parliament will not come into their meaſures, they mean to carry them by force; yea, to execute, as well as to enact by their own authority, if they can but make their party ſtrong enough? If ſuch proceedings are not puniſhable by

law,

law, it muſt only be, becauſe nothing of the kind having ever been attempted in former times, there has never been occaſion to make any law againſt them. The permiſſion of ſuch enormities is the ſtrongeſt evidence, that, inſtead of a tyrannical government, we live under the mildeſt on earth *.

For the meeting of the *French* convention there was ſome reaſon; becauſe the ſecond national aſſembly had ſo much wiſdom left as to diſſolve themſelves, and deſert the helm which they could no longer guide: and they left no conſtituted authority in France. But to ſet up the image of the French convention among *us*, while the known and eſtabliſhed authorities remain, is the moſt flagrant attempt that ever was made, to ſubvert all order, and introduce confuſion and every evil work.

The Britiſh people have an unqueſtioned right to petition the king or either houſe of parliament. Their petitions, however unreaſonable, if but conceived in decent terms, will be received: and if they are reaſonable, I hope they will be granted. But ſurely the legiſlature muſt have a right to determine whether petitions ſhall be granted or not: otherwiſe why petition them? It is among the other excellencies of our conſtitution, that it has the principles of reform within itſelf. If defects ſhould be found in it, or ſhould creep into it, through the lapſe of time, as nothing human is either perfect or permanent,—it belongs to the legiſlature to reform theſe defects: they have power to do it; and I hope they will do it, if dutifully applied to. But to attempt

* Since writing the above, I am happy to hear that the Magiſtrates of the city and county of Edinburgh, have prohibited the meeting of the pretended convention in their bounds: for which they deſervedly have the thanks of the friends of tranquillity and order; both there and in other places.

attempt to over-awe the legiſlature, and influence by clamour, or by the appearance of numbers, their deciſions,—what is it, but an attempt, an impotent attempt I hope it will prove, to deſtroy their authority, and put the actual exerciſe of ſovereignty in the hands of the populace?

From the time that the Jacobine Club at Paris, in concert with other aſſociations of the ſame ſort in other parts of the kingdom, and in conjunction with the mob of Paris, took upon them to decide upon the general buſineſs of the nation, and to preſcribe meaſures to what was called the legiſlative aſſembly,—every thing has ruſhed into confuſion in France. The preſent convention, ever ſince it met, has been no more than a tool in the hands of the Jacobin Club and the Paris rabble: and the world has been witneſs to the dreadful conſequences. Similar cauſes will always produce ſimilar effects. If ever our clubs and conventions ſhall become ſo powerful as to be able to dictate to parliament, or if parliament ſhall become ſo weak, in point of intellects, as to ſuffer them to attempt it with impunity, that day will put an end to all regular government and ſubordination among us. Our happy conſtitution, the work of ages, and the admiration of mankind, will go to wreck in one hour: and the ſame ſcene will be acted here, that has been in rehearſal, for eighteen months paſt, on the other ſide of the channel.

ESSAY VI.

On LIBERTY and EQUALITY.

"WHAT!" ſay our modern innovators, "ſhall we "be precluded from ſeeking the redreſs of "our grievances, in what way, or by what means "we pleaſe? Are not liberty and equality the natural "rights of men? And who ſhall deprive us of the one, "or of the other?" Liberty is, doubtleſs, one of the moſt valuable earthly bleſſings; but, like all others, it is liable to be abuſed. Often has it been employed as a cloke of licentiouſneſs: but it is only of late, that it has been coupled with equality. Let us examine, with candour, this new aſſociation.

Liberty is one of thoſe things of which every man has ſome kind of conception, but which no man finds it eaſy to define. Paſſing over the various deſcriptions that have been given of it, it is manifeſt that perfect liberty muſt conſiſt in *an unlimited power of doing what one pleaſes*: or of following the dictates of one's own will, without any reſtraint from without himſelf. But it is equally manifeſt, that this ſort of liberty is competent to God only: becauſe none but he has a right to make his own ſovereign will the ſole rule of his actions.

Or

Or if any creature enjoy it, muſt be a creature, whoſe will is exactly conformable to his. The will of God is the ſupreme rule of conduct to all rational creatures, as well as to himſelf: as none but He can be independent. He made his will known to the firſt man, by writing his law in his heart: but this laid no reſtraint upon him till ſin entered; becauſe he followed his own will, in yielding obedience to his Creator. When ſin ſhall be totally aboliſhed in the people of God, and their will reſtored to its primitive conformity to the will of God, they will then be reſtored to perfect liberty; becauſe they will fulfil their own will, in doing the will of their God and Saviour: and will be incapable to take pleaſure in any thing that he prohibits. This is the caſe, even in this world, as far as they are ſanctified: Hence, like David, they walk at liberty, becauſe they ſeek God's precepts. This is that glorious liberty, wherewith Chriſt hath made us free.

But, as all men, whether ſaints or ſinners, while in this life, have much corruption about them, their wills muſt always be inclined, more or leſs, to what is contrary to God's will, and is prohibited by his law. That law, therefore, will always prove a great reſtraint upon the liberty of mortals. Suppoſing mankind to be in what is called the ſtate of nature, before the formation of ſociety, or the erection of government of any kind: in that caſe, no man was under any ſubjection to the will of any fellow-creature, nor was his will under any other reſtraint but the law of nature. Even in that ſtate he could have no right to kill, to lie, or do any thing elſe which God in that law had forbidden. Thus, every man would have had an unreſtrained right to follow his own will, as far as it was agreeable to the law of nature.

And

And this is, preciſely, what ought to be called *natural liberty*.

Though this natural liberty can never be increaſed by any human inſtitution; becauſe men can never have power to aboliſh, or to leſſen the obligation of the law of God: yet this liberty may be abridged by human authority; and muſt be ſo, wherever ſociety exiſts. When any number of men ſet up any form of government among themſelves, they muſt not only fix certain regulations, at the firſt, according to which they will be governed; but they muſt likewiſe eſtabliſh, in ſome hand or other, a power of making laws for time to come. Every member of that ſociety muſt give up his natural liberty, ſo far, as not only to ſubmit to the fundamental regulations formally agreed to by the whole, but alſo to the will of thoſe who form the legiſlature in the ſociety, in all things that are not contrary to the law of nature. But he parts with this portion of his natural liberty, only upon condition of his being ſo protected by the community, or by thoſe to whoſe hands the adminiſtration is entruſted, that none may have power to lay any reſtraint upon his will, but what is laid upon him, by the laws of God or of his country. This is what has been called *civil liberty*.

Hence it is manifeſt, that no man, in the due exerciſe of reaſon will ever claim the unreſtrained uſe of natural liberty, in the ſocial ſtate. The will of every individual muſt be ſubject to the public will. But if the government is rightly conſtituted, every one has a ſufficient compenſation for that portion of his liberty which he gives up, in the protection which he enjoys, under the wings of the law. And no man has ground to complain, while no reſtraint is laid upon him by the public will, but what is for the general good.

Every

Every one knows that all governments are not alike friendly to liberty. Some allow the ſubject to retain a greater ſhare of his natural liberty, and ſome a leſs. And that government is always the beſt, where moſt of it is ſuffered to remain, provided the ends of government are gained. This is the very thing, that, above all others, ſhews the excellence of our government, and conſtitutes Britiſh liberty. We are not only ſecured againſt ſubjection to the will of any man, or any ſet of men, contrary to law; but the law itſelf allows us to follow the dictates of our own will in more caſes, and lays us under fewer reſtraints, than the laws of any other country do. A Britiſh ſubject may do with himſelf, and with all that is his own, juſt what he pleaſes, ſo long as he does no injury to his fellow ſubjects, or to the community at large.

It is likewiſe evident, that it is impoſſible to frame any government in ſuch a manner, as that all who live under it ſhould be alike free. Suppoſing a government ſo perfect as to have every law enacted, that could conduce to the good of the nation, and no more, it is evident, that the man who was moſt diſpoſed to promote the public good, would always have moſt liberty; becauſe, in doing what he pleaſed, he would juſt do what the law required. On the other hand, if there exiſted in that nation, an enemy to his country, or one who wiſhed to promote his own intereſt, by oppreſſing or injuring his fellow ſubjects, that man would live under continual reſtraint. He would be a ſlave in the midſt of a free nation; becauſe he could never follow his own will, without tranſgreſſing the laws. Hence it follows, that, under every good government, the moſt virtuous man is always moſt free: and the moſt wicked will always be under the greateſt reſtraint. No government

can

can be ſaid to be unfriendly to liberty, becauſe the covetous man is reſtrained from ſtealing, or the man of blood from murder. It is the principal end of laws to prevent ſuch men from following the dictates of their depraved will: and when laws cannot do it, they muſt be reſtrained by puniſhments. It is therefore nothing to the diſadvantge of any government, to find wicked men complaining of want of liberty under it, while the honeſt, induſtrious, virtuous citizen feels himſelf under no reſtraint. And this affords no ſmall preſumption in favour of our conſtitution. They among us, who, ſince the days of *Wilkes and liberty*, have always been moſt clamourous for more liberty, have been the very perſons who ſtood moſt in need of the reſtraints of law.

This obſervation is peculiarly applicable to thoſe men who are continually harping upon the LIBERTY OF THE PRESS. This branch of civil liberty, as well as every other, however valuable, muſt have its bounds. If every man was to be allowed to publiſh what he pleaſes, without being anſwerable for it when publiſhed, as well might every one be permitted to do what he will, without being anſwerable for what he does. To every man of common generoſity, his reputation is as dear as his life. A public ſlanderer, therefore, is as dangerous an enemy to ſociety, as an aſſaſſin. And to give free toleration to the one is equally pernicious as to grant it to the other. A libel upon the conſtitution and laws of the country is ſurely as prejudicial as a libel upon a private character. It is a peculiar happineſs of Britiſh ſubjects, that every one is at liberty freely to publiſh, as well as to ſpeak his ſentiments, concerning public meaſures. This is an advantage to the conſtitution, and even to adminiſtration; becauſe they have, thereby, an opportunity to avail themſelves of the wiſdom of individuals;

duals, not connected with government. But this liberty may be abuſed. A man may ſpeak treaſon, and why may he not print it? And if he who ſpeaks it in a private company may be puniſhed, why ſhould not he who ſpreads it through the whole nation, by his writings. Men of loyal, peaceable, or even moderate principles, feel themſelves under no reſtraint: and if ſeditious men are in high dudgeon, becauſe they are not allowed to ſow the ſeeds of rebellion with impunity, it is no more to be wondered at, than a thief's crying out againſt the gallows.

That *liberty of the preſs*, which is the acknowledged birth-right of every Britiſh ſubject, does not conſiſt in being allowed to publiſh what one pleaſes, without being accountable for it. But "preciſely in this, that "neither courts of juſtice, nor any other judges what-"ever, are allowed to take any notice of writings in-"tended for the preſs; but are confined to thoſe which "are actually publiſhed: and in theſe caſes, muſt pro-"ceed by trial by jury *." Or, to uſe the words of a learned judge, "It conſiſts in laying no previous reſ-"traints upon publications, and not in freedom from "cenſure for criminal matter when publiſhed. Every "freeman has an undoubted right to lay what ſenti-"ments he pleaſes before the public: to forbid this is "to deſtroy the freedom of the preſs: but if he pub-"liſhes what is improper, miſchievous, or illegal, he "muſt take the conſequence of his own temerity †." This is all the liberty that even Mr Erſkine pleads for, in his celebrated ſpeech at Mr Paine's trial. The gene-

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* De Lolme, p. 297.

† Blackſtone's Com. vol. iv. p. 151, 152.

ral principles laid down in that ſpeech, no man in Britain will deny. His application of them to the cauſe he was defending, every one will excuſe; becauſe, as a laywer, he would conſider himſelf as bound to ſay whatever he could for his client. But not one word did he ſay, tending to prove that Mr Paine deſerved no puniſhment for what he had publiſhed. Only he had uſed his privilege, in publiſhing what he pleaſed: and if he had done wrong, was to take the conſequence. When I read that ſpeech, I took it for granted, that he would have been hiſſed at, by all the Friends of Mr Paine's doctrine, as having deſerted the cauſe: and I dare ſay, he himſelf was ſurprized, as well as many others, at the very different reception they gave him. Indeed, if doctrines as inimical to the conſtitution and peace of any country, were allowed to be publiſhed in that country, with impunity, there would be an end of all government, and of all order. Were Mr Paine now to publiſh any thing as inimical to the French convention, and their new-fangled conſtitution, he would inſtantly meet with that fate which in his preſent impriſonment, he has good reaſon to fear is not very diſtant.

It is well known, that, from the Union of the two Crowns, till the year 1694, which was ſix years after the Revolution, nothing was ſuffered to be publiſhed, till it had paſſed through the hands of a licencer appointed by the court, and had received his *imprimatur*. This was to cramp the liberty of the preſs. Yet ſomething like this is practiſed to this day, in moſt other nations; and even in ſome republics. Among us now, after a man has publiſhed what he thinks fit, without any to interrupt him, if he comes to be tried for it, it muſt be by a jury of his countrymen. And that jury

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ſhe allowed to determine, not only whether he publiſhed what he is charged with, or not; but alſo whether or not it is a libel. The man who deſires any liberty to the preſs beyond this, muſt have a bad reaſon for ſuch deſire.

There is ſtill another kind of liberty, of which I beg leave to ſay a word or two. At whatever period of ſociety, a people receives a revelation of the will of God, ſuch as we believe to be contained in the Holy Scriptures, this revelation muſt tend, in ſome reſpect, to reſtrain men's liberty; becauſe, by it the will of God is made known more perfectly, than by the law of nature: and, as it requires duties which the other did not require, ſo it prohibits ſome things as ſinful, which the other could not diſcover to be ſo. Such a revelation muſt affect the legiſlative authority, in every nation where it is received, as well as the ſubjects. For as no human authority can enact laws inconſiſtent with the law of nature; ſo neither can human authority have any right to enact laws contrary to revelation, which proceeds from the ſame divine ſource. Every perſon, therefore, who believes divine revelation, muſt be freely allowed to do what God requires, and to abſtain from what he forbids, without being reſtrained in theſe matters, by the will of any man, or of any ſociety. This is what we have been accuſtomed to call, *religious liberty*.

Divine Revelation is chiefly verſant about things that could not have been known without it: and therefore things that cannot properly come under the cognizance of human laws; which muſt all be founded on the light and law of nature. Revelation does neither enlarge nor infringe political liberty. It neither extends nor contracts civil authority: it deſtroys not, but confirms

the obligation of civil and municipal laws, unleſs they are inconſiſtent with the laws of God. On the other hand, the duties which revelation impoſes, unleſs in as far as they were previouſly required by the law of nature, are ſuch as could have been enjoined by no human authority: nor can any human authority infringe the liberty of Chriſtians, by requiring other duties of a ſimilar nature. For inſtance; God has himſelf determined how, when, and with what he is to be worſhipped: and He only had a right to do ſo. As no human legiſlature has a right to prohibit that worſhip which He hath inſtituted; ſo, if any human legiſlator ſhould pretend to enjoin us to worſhip Him, by ceremonies and ſervices which He has not required, or to employ in his worſhip certain days and times which He has not appointed to be ſo employed; the province of God is thereby invaded, and the liberties of his people infringed. Still more guilty ſhould that man be, of whatever civil authority he be lawfully poſſeſſed, who ſhould take upon him to increaſe our liberty, by ſetting us free from thoſe laws, which God, in the word of revelation has impoſed. Nor can any of the powers of this world be guiltleſs, in pretending to add ſanctions to the peculiar laws of revelation, or to enforce obedience to them by civil puniſhments. This is to ſuppoſe, that God's authority is not ſufficient to produce obedience to his own laws, or that the puniſhments, that he has denounced againſt the tranſgreſſors of them, are not adequate.

By revelation, God has erected a ſociety in the world, which is called the church, eſſentially different from all ſocieties of human formation. *She* owes her being to a divine inſtitution: *they* depend, for their exiſtence; upon the appointments of men. *They* are erected,

rected, for ſecuring to mankind, in this world, ſuch a degree of outward happineſs, as their tranſient and imperfect eſtate admits of; but *ſhe* is ſet up, as a nurſery for another world, that men may be prepared for perfect happineſs, in the eternal ſtate, and ſafely conducted to it. This ſpiritual ſociety extends over all the places of the world, where the Chriſtian religion is received: and all who make profeſſion of that religion, together with their children, are members of it. Their being members of it makes no alteration, with reſpect to their memberſhip in civil ſociety; but lays them under additional obligations to perform the duties of their political ſtations reſpectively, whether they be magiſtrates or ſubjects, maſters, or ſervants, bondmen, or free. But, under whatever form of civil government her members live, Jeſus Chriſt alone is her King. By Him is her conſtitution, and form of government appointed: from Him are all her laws and ordinances derived: and by His authority alone they are to be executed. They are enforced, not by civil ſanctions, by puniſhments to be inflicted on men's bodies, or affecting their outward eſtates; but partly by thoſe wholeſome cenſures, that He has given, for edification and not for deſtruction; the ſevereſt of which is excluſion from her communion; and partly by that final ſentence, which Himſelf in perſon will paſs upon every man, according as his works ſhall be.

Of thoſe ſpiritual rights and liberties, which God, by revelation, has beſtowed upon his people, they cannot diveſt themſelves for the ſake of ſociety, as they may of their natural liberty: becauſe they are a truſt committed to them, for which they muſt be anſwerable to the Giver, and without which the proper form and order of the ſociety cannot be maintained. The law of nature

nature itſelf, from which all natural rights are derived, points out civil government, as the beſt mean of ſecuring the moſt valuable of theſe rights, to individuals, and to ſociety. The ſame law, which gives us natural liberty and the rights depending on it, and allows us to exerciſe theſe rights in perſon, while we have not the benefit of civil government, requires us to abridge that liberty, and to give up a part of the rights belonging to it, into the hands of civil rulers, for the public good, as ſoon as ſuch rulers are regularly ſet up. As for religious liberty, and the rights depending upon it, the ſame revelation from which they are derived, forbids us to part with any of them: expreſly requiring us to *ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free.*

The want of a due attention to theſe differences, between theſe two ſorts of liberty, and the rights depending on them reſpectively, may lead perſons into very groſs miſtakes. On the one hand, ſome who have a becoming zeal for religious liberty, and are aware of the neceſſity of contending for it, may apprehend that natural liberty is equally inviolable; and that they ſhould be equally guilty in giving up any part of it. But it is impoſſible that the ends of the law of nature can be gained, in the ſocial ſtate, without every individual giving up a portion of his natural liberty; while the ends of revelation are counteracted, as far as Chriſtian liberty is infringed.——Some, on the other hand, may imagine, that, becauſe religious liberty is as valuable as civil, and civil liberty, when attacked, may be defended by the ſword; therefore religious liberty muſt be defended in the ſame way. If our civil rights and liberties are in *real* danger, they muſt be ſupported by ſuch means and weapons as are in the hands of civil

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ſociety. But our Chriſtian liberty, and the rights belonging to it are only to be defended by ſuch weapons, as the word of God has furniſhed us with. If any man take the ſword for ſuch a purpoſe, the King of the church has ſaid, he ſhall periſh by the ſword. And equally unwarrantable it is, to make uſe of any other carnal weapon.

When Satan, like a great red dragon, made war againſt the ſaints, by means of the Roman empire in its pagan ſtate, *they overcame him*, only *by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony* *. Without intermeddling with civil affairs, or making uſe of any methods, which carnal policy might have dictated, to procure a government more favourable to their religious rights or liberties; they ſatisfied themſelves with uſing ſuch means as were competent to every one, in his own place and ſtation, to further the ſpreading of the goſpel, with enjoying, among themſelves, in ſecret when they durſt not publicly, thoſe privileges which belonged to them as Chriſtians, with obſerving the ordinances of Chriſt, and performing the duties which his law required, towards one another, and towards all men. By theſe, and by a patient bearing of all their ſufferings, they contributed more to the maintainance and propagation of their religion, than ever they could have done, by any of thoſe means, that are employed in civil conteſts. And the men were at length aſhamed, who falſely accuſed their good converſation in Chriſt.

Upon this principle have Seceders acted hitherto. We could have no occaſion for a ſeparation from the church eſtabliſhed by law, if we did not think that there is ſomething wrong in that eſtabliſhment. Againſt the *eccleſiaſtical*

* Rev. xii. 11.

eccleſiaſtical part of our conſtitution, we have always borne teſtimony, as prejudicial to the liberties of Chriſt's ſubjects, as well as to the prerogatives of his crown. But, along with this teſtimony, we have ever ſatisfied ourſelves with practiſing among ourſelves thoſe duties which we think the law of Chriſt requires; and enjoying thoſe liberties and privileges, that he has bequeathed to us. In this we have met with no interruption from our civil rulers: and we have never thought it neceſſary to uſe any other means to bring about reformation. Let us not now provoke adminiſtration, and draw down perſecution upon our own heads, by attempting to promote the cauſe of Chriſt, or the intereſts of his ſpiritual kingdom, by ſuch methods as himſelf never appointed for ſuch a purpoſe. It is long ſince the ſpirit of God aſſured us, that eccleſiaſtical reform muſt be brought about by other means. *Not by might nor by power; but by my ſpirit, ſaith the Lord* *. When God's time ſhall come to pour out this ſpirit upon all fleſh, according to his promiſe, the true diſtinction between the kingdom of Chriſt and the kingdoms of this world will be fully and generally known. Both kings and ſubjects will count it their honour to diveſt themſelves of all that they have uſurped from the crown of Chriſt, and to deſiſt from all oppreſſion of God's heritage: reformation will be brought about without noiſe or tumult; and the ſtill ſmall voice of the goſpel will be of more uſe for that purpoſe, than all the clubs, conventions or aſſociations, that ever men can form. Let us aſſociate ourſelves, as we have done hitherto, for the purpoſes of Chriſtian fellowſhip, and ſocial worſhip: but I tremble at the thoughts

* Zech. iv. 6.

thoughts of our attempting to promote the cauſe of truth, or of Chriſtian liberty, by joining in political aſſociations, to diſturb the peace of our country, with men who are as much enemies to our religion, as they are to our political conſtitution.

Having ſaid this much of liberty, let us now take a view of her baſtard ſiſter *Equality*. But here, I am afraid, we have got Proteus by the neck. No perſon can tell us what this equality is, that is pled for. If we hunt it down in one ſhape, it inſtantly aſſumes another, and we know not what we are contending about.

If they only mean, that every good ſubject ſhould enjoy an equal ſhare of civil liberty, an equal protection of law, and an equal ſecurity for his perſon and property, this kind of equality we all admit: and, thanks to kind Providence, we all enjoy it; unleſs we have forfeited it by our crimes. Am not I as much under the protection of the law, as the Duke of *Buccleugh* is? Have not I the ſame ſecurity for my ſmall pittance, as he has for his princely eſtate? If any man injure me, have I not the ſame recourſe to the laws of my country, as he would in a ſimilar caſe? If his *Grace* himſelf ſhould ever ſo far change his diſpoſition or conduct, as to become my oppreſſor, have I not the ſame acceſs to a court of juſtice, and the ſame proſpect of having juſtice done me, as he would have, if I ſhould treſpaſs againſt him? It is poſſible, indeed, that a corrupt judge, influenced by his rank, or his riches, might paſs an unjuſt ſentence againſt me: but it is likewiſe poſſible, that a judge of ſtrong feelings, ſympathizing with me in the unequal conteſt, might give a partial deciſion in my favour; otherwiſe the law of God had never forbidden to *countenance*

*hance a poor man in his cauſe**. And, till there ceaſe to be corruption in human nature, no law, nor government on earth can prevent inſtances of that kind. But they who have made the trial can witneſs, that there are fewer ſuch inſtances in Britain, than under any other government in Europe: or any that ever was in it. † Nor is there any doubt, that my opponent might better afford to bear the expences of the lawſuit, and therefore might find means to protract it till my ſmall finances were exhauſted. But in that caſe I can get upon the poor's roll; and an atteſtation of this by the Miniſter of the pariſh will procure me law for nought. What can human wiſdom do more, to ſet us upon an equal footing, unleſs there was an equal diviſion of property between him and me?

Such an equality of property, we are told, they do not plead for: and no man of underſtanding will plead for it. It may eaſily be believed, that the leaders of our aſſociations, if they could ſucceed in their ambitious views, would wiſh to keep the largeſt ſhare of the property to themſelves. But no perſon can be ignorant, that many of the deluded people, whom they have prevailed with to join their Societies, and ſubſcribe their papers, look forward to ſuch an Equalization of Property, as one effect of the reform expected: and this proſpect is the principal thing that engages them to the cauſe.

Some tell us, that what they contend for, is an equal eligibility to places of power and truſt under government: and this alſo in a certain ſenſe, we enjoy. The law, indeed, requires certain qualifications, in thoſe who poſſeſs ſuch places; but any Britiſh ſubject may enjoy

* Exod. xxiii. 3.

† See De Lolme Ch. xvi. throughout.

joy them, upon qualifying himſelf as the law directs. Seceder as I am, there is no law to prevent his Majeſty from appointing me prime Miniſter. And if he does, I have it in my choice, either to accept the appointment, and quality myſelf for it, by taking the oaths, and the Sacramental Teſt, as the law directs, or adhere to my principles, and refuſe the appointment, becauſe I will not qualify. If the alternative was between ſin and ſuffering, every Chriſtian ſhould know what choice to make: but here there is no ſuffering on either ſide. I have only to chooſe, whether I ſhall enjoy riches and honour and power, at the expence of my principles, or keep a clear conſcience and continue as I am. To be a miniſter of ſtate is none of the natural and unalienable rights of man: and I am deprived of none of my rights, by being kept from that office.

" But, though the actual enjoyment of civil offices " and places is no man's right; yet eligibility to ſuch " offices is every man's right, and why ſhould we be de- " prived of it?" I ſhall never ſtand up to vindicate any law or cuſtom, that lays a man under ſuch diſabilities, as prevents his enjoying any office in the ſtate, on account of his religious opinions, provided he is otherwiſe a good ſubject. But, the true reaſon why diſſenters lye under ſuch diſabilities, is becauſe the legiſlature does not conſider them as being as good ſubjects, and as friendly to the conſtitution, as thoſe of the national church. Let us not confirm that prejudice, by taking part in meaſures of ſedition: but let us, by exemplary loyalty, and by ſupporting the conſtitution of our country, againſt all ſuch meaſures, and againſt all the abettors of ſuch meaſures, prove ourſelves to be good ſubjects indeed.

But why ſhould we contend about a phantom? And what elſe but a phantom is this eligibility? What avails

it me, that no law precludes me from an office, for which nature never qualified me, or from which providence has ſet me at ſuch a diſtance, that I can never have any reaſonable hope of enjoying it? Unleſs we are influenced by ambition, or ſome other principle equally fordid, this kind of equality will never be conſidered by us, as an object worth contending about: much leſs an object, on account of which we may embroil our country, or involve it in anarchy and confuſion.

Our friends muſt acknowledge, that they who are entruſted with the ſupreme power, in any nation, muſt have right to nominate whom they think moſt proper, to inferior offices under them. And they cannot ſay, that any man is deprived of his right, becauſe he is paſſed by in ſuch nomination. Or will they maintain, that, though no man can be born a king, one may be born a miniſter of ſtate, a judge, or a general in the army?—They muſt likewiſe allow, that laws may be made, without injuſtice, excluding men, who are acknowledged good ſubjects, from certain places of power, truſt or dignity in the ſtate. Is not a ſeat in the Houſe of Commons a place of as high truſt, as any that the nation has to beſtow? Would they think it reaſonable that peers, officers of exciſe, or commiſſioners of the cuſtoms, ſhould be rendered eligible to a ſeat in that houſe? Or do they think, that a man's being a Lord, or an exciſe officer, deprives him of any of the inviolable rights of man?

But perhaps it is an equality of rank and dignity that we wiſh for. "The French have aboliſhed all titles of "honour, and why ſhould not we? Why ſhould one "man be called my Lord, and another his Grace, while "a better man than either is no more than plain John "or Thomas?" But, pray what would be gained by ſuch equality, unleſs the gratification of envy? This is

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no way neceſſary to republican government: Rome had her ſenators, her patricians, and her Roman knights. Theſe are the cheapeſt rewards that any government can beſtow, upon thoſe who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by public uſefulneſs: rewards which will be more valued, by men of generous minds, than pecuniary rewards would be: and, with us, they ſtand upon ſuch a footing, as can never be hurtful to the commonwealth. We have already ſeen of what uſe the Houſe of Lords is, in the Britiſh conſtitution: and what difference there is between our nobility and theirs in France. There was perhaps a neceſſity for ſetting the French nobility upon a new footing, for reducing their number, and aboliſhing ſome of their privileges. But the total abolition of all titles of honour was one of the moſt fooliſh acts of the French revolutioniſts, and perhaps one of the moſt ruinous. Had the people of that kingdom been protected, againſt the encroachments of the crown, by ſuch a nobility as ours is, their kings had never riſen to arbitrary power. And had the throne been ſurrounded, adorned, and defended, by ſuch a nobility, it had never been in the power of a junto, raiſed from the dregs of the people, aſſiſted by the *canaille* of Paris, to have aſſaulted the king in his own houſe, murdered his guards, thruſt himſelf and his innocent family into priſon, and afterwards brought them to the block; for no other crime, but his having exerciſed that right which was reſerved to him by the conſtitution, which they, as well as he, were ſworn to maintain. I know he was charged with attempting to ſubvert the conſtitution; but ſuppoſing that charge proved, if that was criminal in him, how could they be innocent, when they overturned it at once? Beſides, in ſupport of that, or any other charge of real criminality againſt him, or againſt his unhappy

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conſort, they produced no evidence, upon which any man of an unbiaſſed judgement, would have hazarded the life of his dog.

But the moſt rational account of this equality which is now argued for, is, that it conſiſts in an equality of power, or political influence. The ſovereignty, and all the power of the ſtate is radically in the people. This power the people ought to retain in their own hands. And if it were ſhared by all the people, every individual would be $\frac{1}{8000000}$ part of a King. But, as we ſhall be allowed to cut off all women and children, and probably all menial ſervants, the number of thoſe who have a claim to the rights of man, may be computed at two millions. The ſovereignty therefore muſt be divided into as many ſhares; and of theſe every active citizen is to poſſeſs one. Doubtleſs this will be very juſt, when once we have all government aboliſhed, and ourſelves reduced to that ſtate of perfect barbariſm, towards which our neighbours are faſt verging. But even if this were attained, an important queſtion will ariſe, whether each ſhall retain his portion of ſovereignty in his own hands, or whether it ſhall be deputed in the hands of repreſentatives? It is very probable that one part of the ſovereign people will be for the one method, and another part for the other. The people in and about London, can meet together at a few hours warning, to the number of two hundred thouſand, if they can but find a place large enough to contain the aſſembly. Thus they can exerciſe their ſovereignty in perſon: and probably they would chooſe to do ſo. But our *ſans-culloles*, in the highlands and iſlands of Scotland muſt be content with ſending repreſentatives; for it is impoſſible for them all to attend, as often as an aſſembly of the people ſhall be neceſſary. And who ſhall decide between their

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London brethren and them? But the idea of a whole people, gathering from all parts of a country ſo extenſive and ſo populous as Britain, to deliberate about the making of laws, is ſo abſurd, that it muſt, of neceſſity, be laid aſide.

If we are agreed, that the ſovereignty is to be exerciſed by repreſentatives, then equality is already deſtroyed. Each repreſentative is conſtituted a legiſlator, he is inveſted with as many portions of the ſovereignty, as there were active citizens who had a vote in chooſing him; while his electors themſelves ſink into mere ſubjects. But ſuppoſe it is only meant, that every man ſhould have an equal right to elect, and an equal influence in elections: let us ſee if even this be poſſible. I go to the place of election, without connections, without dependents, and without any thing to ſupport my opinion, but the honeſty of my intentions; for every man may be allowed to ſuppoſe *himſelf* honeſt. But I have a rich neighbour, who happens to be in the oppoſite intereſt. He comes, attended with 500 tenants, and dependants, who all know that he can turn them out from their farms or places, if they do not vote as he does. Where now is the equality between him and me? It cannot exiſt without an equality of property.

Suppoſe this likewiſe obtained. All men come to the place of election upon a level: no one is worth one farthing more than another; and with perfect equality the election is got through. But before the year's end, one man has ſquandered his allotment of property in riot and diſſipation, and another has doubled his by laudable induſtry. Before a new election, we muſt have a new diviſion of property. The induſtrious man is to be robbed of the fruit of his labour; and it muſt become the reward of him who is a peſt to ſociety, that,

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at the election they may have equal influence. Suppoſe this new diviſion made; (for what is impoſſible to a ſovereign mob?) the diſſipated wretch happens to be a man of abilities, can ſpeak, and knows how to work upon the paſſions of a multitude: the man of induſtry is a blunt, honeſt fellow, who contents himſelf with ſaying *aye* or *no*. The firſt makes a vehement harrangue, in favours of ſome unworthy candidate of his own kidney, and is followed with huzzas, and acclamations of *Paine for ever*. The other can only ſay, "Gentlemen, "I vote for ſuch a man, becauſe I know him to be an "honeſt man, and a friend of his country:" and no body attends to him. The libertine, of conſequence, carries the election by a great majority, and the friend of his country is rejected. Thus, to maintain an equality of influence, even in annual elections, we muſt not only have an annual diviſion of property, we muſt alſo bring over dame nature to our ſcheme, and obtain from her a decree, that all men ſhall have equal abilities, or, which will be much ſafer, ſhall be born dunces. In one word, if we are not ſatisfied with that ſort of equality, which we already enjoy in Britain, I know no other ſpecies of it, that can ſubſiſt one month, among mankind, while natural talents, acquirements, and accompliſhments, are ſo unequally diſtributed.

ESSAY

ESSAY VII.

On Taxations.

A Principal reaſon why many are diſatisfied with the preſent government, is drawn from the heavy taxes impoſed for its ſupport. No man will deny that our burdens are heavy: and there is no man in the nation who would not wiſh, if poſſible, to have them reduced. But before we attack the preſent ſyſtem, or wiſh to overturn it on that account, we would do well to conſider the few things following.

It is utterly impoſſible, that any government can be ſupported without funds. And, for the ſupport of ſuch a government as ours, the funds muſt be conſiderable. We muſt not only maintain a ſtanding army, proportionable to what is kept on foot by neighbouring ſtates. We muſt have a fleet ſufficient to protect our trade. Our colonies, in different parts of the world muſt be protected. And the intereſt of our national debt muſt be paid. Little more than a century ago, the government of both kingdoms was ſupported, with few taxations. But then we had no national debt: we had no colonies: we had no ſtanding armies: we had no ſhips of war. Merchant ſhips were hired by government,

for

for war, as they now are for tranſports. Our troops in the time of war, were only raiſed for a few weeks; and, for the moſt part, they ſubſiſted themſelves. A great proportion of the land, in both countries, belonged to the crown: and its revenues were conſiderably augmented by wardſhips, eſcheats, and other feudal perquiſites. And theſe, though not levied as our taxes now are, were no leſs burdenſome to the people. The nation thought themſelves happy, when they could exchange the one ſort of burdens for the other.

It muſt be acknowledged, that the power of taxation is one branch of the power of legiſlation: and wherever the legiſlative authority is lodged, by the conſtitution of any country, there muſt the power of impoſing taxes be lodged. Accordingly, the ſcriptures expreſly require us to pay tribute, or taxations of whatever kind, to every government, to whoſe lawful commands, in other things, we are called to be ſubject. It is perfectly reaſonable that it ſhould be ſo. How can we, who live at a diſtance from the ſeat of government, and know but little of its affairs, be as capable to judge of what is neceſſary for the ſupport of government, as they whom the nation has choſen, to attend to this very thing? And it is our peculiar happineſs, that no taxes can be impoſed upon us, unleſs with the conſent, and even at the motion, of our repreſentatives.

Heavy as our taxes are, we are far from being as much burdened as our neighbours: even ſuch of them as live under a republican government. To be convinced of this, one needs only look into any approved geographical grammar. In Holland, for inſtance, their taxes are incomparably heavier than ours: and they fall in a much greater proportion upon the poor. Their taxes upon merchandize are indeed eaſy; ſo that their richeſt

richeſt merchants pay little more to the ſtate, than the pooreſt mechanic: hence their flouriſhing trade. But all the neceſſaries of life are taxed. A man cannot buy a pound of meat in the ſhambles, nor a buſhel of corn in the market, that is not ſubject to a duty. Even their putrid and ſtagnant water is not free. Every hearth, yea, every human head is taxed. And a certain writer obſerves with juſtice, that they have nothing free, but the air they breathe.—In France, beſides a heavy land tax, the *gabelle*, or tax upon ſalt, was intolerable. Salt being a monopoly in the hands of government, every family was not only obliged to take all the ſalt they uſed at an exorbitant price; they were even forced to take a fixed quantity, whether they uſed it or not. They likewiſe paid a poll-tax, and a tenth part of all perſonal eſtates, and of the income of all employments. This laſt article alone, would be heavier than all our taxes together. And except the ſalt-duty, I hear not that any of the reſt have been reduced, ſince the revolution. On the contrary, it was one of the firſt decrees of the preſent convention, that all taxes ſhould continue as they were, till the nation was ſettled. Thus, their republican government, after confiſcating, at leaſt, one third of the property of the nation, as belonging to the king, to emigrants, and perſons guillotined, and nearly another third, as having belonged to the church, leave the people as much burdened as ever. They who wiſh to know the ſtate of taxation in Spain, may peruſe the book referred to in the margin *. I ſhall only mention the following particulars. In Madrid, the King receives one third of the rent of every houſe. Corn, cattle, and all the produce of the earth pays a heavy duty, every time that it is ſold,

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* Townſend's journey, particularly, vol. ii. p. 155,—189.

according to its value. And in ſome places, (for all places in Spain are not taxed alike,) a duty of four per cent. is levied upon all cattle brought into their cities for ſlaughter; and at certain ſeaſons of the year much more. Theſe are only a few examples of the taxes that our neighbours pay. Have we the ſame reaſon to complain as they have?

Taxes are not, in reality, ſo burdenſome, as many people are apt to imagine: the longer they are continued, they become the lighter, till they ceaſe to be any burden at all. This may be thought a bold aſſertion; but it is capable of demonſtration. Let the land tax be an inſtance. Suppoſe it fixed, at a real two ſhillings in the pound, and rendered permanent. In that caſe, when a man buys an eſtate, he knows what it muſt pay to government, he buys it with that burden upon it, and the price is diminiſhed accordingly. It is plain, that if it is worth 27 years purchaſe with that burden, it would be worth 30 without it. One tenth of every eſtate really belongs to government: this he does not purchaſe, but only the nine parts, that belonged to the former proprietor. The ſame is the caſe with him that ſucceeds to it, as his father's heir. He is heir only to the nine parts that were his father's; government is not dead, and therefore continues to inherit its own tenth part. The only burden, therefore, that lies upon the proprietor of the eſtate, is that of gathering in the two ſhillings of yearly rent that belongs to government, along with his own eighteen, and paying it in to the collector of the land tax. The ſame may be ſaid of the houſe tax, the window tax, and all others, that affect heritable property.

With regard to duties on merchandiſe, the caſe is ſtill more favourable to the trader. Suppoſe, for inſtance,

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the duty on tobacco to be 1s and 3d per pound, and that it can be imported from America at 9d. The man who enters upon that branch of buſineſs knows it: and it is the ſame thing to him, as if he paid 2s as the importation price; with only the two following differences.—*Firſt*, there is a difference to the nation at large: in regard that five eights of the money continues in the country, whereas, in the other caſe, the whole would go to America. *Secondly*, there is a conſiderable advantage to the trader himſelf. Suppoſe a man imports a cargo of a hundred thouſand pound weight; he pays for the whole, duty included, ten thouſand pounds. He regulates his ſelling price, ſo as to make 5. per cent profit, upon the money laid out, and his clear gain is L. 500. But if the duty was taken off, and he was only to pay the importation price, he would have his whole cargo for L. 3750. And his profit, at the above rate of 5 per cent, would be no more than L. 177: 10. Thus all the burden lying upon the merchant is only that of being a factor for government, to gather in the duty from his cuſtomers, and pay it to the proper officer. And for this factorage, he is paid L. 322: 10. beſides the advantage of having much more money paſſing through his hands. Every perſon acquainted with figures, will find the above calculation juſt; and therefore, the argument concluſive. The ſame argument will hold, with relation to every tax upon articles of trade or manufacture; unleſs the tax raiſes the price ſo as to leſſen the demand.

"But does not all this fall upon the conſumer? "Though the landed gentleman and the merchant do "not feel the burden, the poor labourer does, and the "community at large."—No doubt, taxations laid upon commodities, muſt fall upon the conſumer: but we

ſhould

ſhould advert, that that conſumer is often a foreigner. Many of thoſe goods, that have paid duties to government are exported. Perhaps a drawback is allowed, and, in ſo far government itſelf pays the duty. If there is no drawback, the exporter hopes for a profit, at leaſt equal to what he would have made, by ſelling his goods at home: otherwiſe he would not give himſelf the trouble. Wherever he carries his goods, and whoever becomes the purchaſer, he is refunded for the duty he paid at home. Thus all the world aſſiſts us in paying our taxes: the burden of them falls ultimately upon the people in Turkey, in Ruſſia, in America, and in the Eaſt-Indies, as well as upon ourſelves. And till we know what proportion of ſuch commodities is exported, it is impoſſible to compute what ſhare of the burden lies upon the people at home.

Not only does our ſyſtem of taxation raiſe the price of thoſe commodities that are taxed; it tends to lower the value of money, and ſo to raiſe the price of things that pay no duty, almoſt in the ſame proportion with things that do. He that deals in articles not taxed, conſumes a part of thoſe things that are. To enable him to purchaſe theſe, he advances his price too: and, inſtead of being a loſer, he gains, upon the whole. Even the price of labour is raiſed, almoſt in the ſame proportion with things that pay duty, and the labourer and the mechanic are in better circumſtances than if there were no taxes to pay.

The wiſdom of our legiſlature appears in this, that, as far back, at leaſt, as my remembrance carries me, they have impoſed few taxes that affect the poor, or thoſe in the lower ranks of life. The produce of the ground is not taxed: and very few of the neceſſaries of life. A labouring man, who earns fourteen or fifteen

pounds

pounds a year; and lays it out upon the maintenance of his family, if they are content to live upon the produce of the country, and to be clad, as their fathers were, in their own manufacture, may live without paying five ſhillings to government, directly or indirectly, through the year; whereas his income is conſiderably better than it would have been, if there had been fewer taxes to pay. If people, in any rank of life, will enjoy luxuries, it is reaſonable that they pay for them. Thus it appears; that though taxes newly impoſed muſt be burdenſome; becauſe they take from the people ſo much of what was formerly their own; yet the longer they continue, they become the lighter: and, in proceſs of time, they ceaſe to be a burden at all. The people, indeed, have money among their hands that is not their own, and muſt be paid to government. But they know it: and it is no more hardſhip to them, than it is to the farmer to pay his rent. Yea, as the farmer expects a profit to himſelf, proportioned to the rent that he pays; ſo the people really enjoy a profit upon their induſtry, in proportion to the taxes they pay.

This reaſoning may not be readily comprehended by ſome: and others will find it ſo different from what they have been accuſtomed to hear, that demonſtration itſelf will not convince them of its juſtice. But let us appeal to experience. A perſon who remembers the ſtate of the country fifty years ago, and compares it with the preſent will eaſily perceive, that the increaſe of taxes, inſtead of producing a proportionable increaſe of poverty and wretchedneſs, has been accompanied with an increaſe of wealth, and of its uſual concomitants, pride and luxury. The hind or the ſhepherd now lives better than the farmer did then. And the farmer now keeps a better houſe than was then kept by the lord of the manor.

manor. I well remember the time when ſixpence a day, without victuals, was conſidered as good wages for a labouring man: now, in the ſame part of the country, a ſhilling is thought but moderate. If a labourer then paid 5s a year to government, it is ſurely eaſier for him now to pay ten: For ſtill he has double what he then had to live upon. Meal, which is the principal food of the poor in Scotland, was ſeldom below 1s 6d the ſtone, at that time; and now it is little more than 2s. And the caſe is much the ſame with other things, which are neceſſary to poor families: ſo that the man who, in thoſe days, could maintain three perſons by his labour, will now maintain four with the ſame eaſe, if they are pleaſed to live now as they did then. It admits not of a doubt, that labouring people, both in town and country, now live in a better houſe, wear better clothes, feed on a better diet, and ſpend more in diſſipation, than their fathers did at that time. If this is not owing to the increaſe of taxes; it is, at leaſt, a demonſtrative evidence, that theſe taxes have not made us poorer than we were; and that we are as able to bear them as our fathers were to bear one half of them.

But, ſuppoſing our taxations to be as burdenſome as they are ſaid to be, no change of government could make them lighter. The revenue of Britain amounts to about fourteen millions yearly. Of theſe, one goes to the civil liſt, of which we ſpoke already, and four to the maintenance of the fleet and army, in time of peace. No conſiderable part of this can be ſaved. And if any perſon who will take the trouble to read the reports of the commiſſioners of public accounts, and to conſider what Parliament has done in conſequence of them, he will be convinced, that œconomy is much more attended to in theſe matters, than it was ſome years ago. Theſe-

five millions would be no burden to the nation, if we had no more to raiſe. But the other nine millions go all to pay the intereſt of the national debt. And a diminution of that debt, is the only habile method to diminiſh the burdens of the people. A ſcheme for that purpoſe, perhaps the beſt that human wiſdom could deviſe, has already been adopted by government: and hitherto its ſucceſs has more than anſwered expectation. If it continues to be purſued, as I hope it will, many now alive, may yet ſee the national debt, immenſe as it is, paid off. But it muſt be done gradually; and conſequently, we can only be relieved from our burdens by degrees.

It may be objected that "new wars will always increaſe our debt, more than it will be diminiſhed by the above mentioned ſcheme." But it is demonſtrated, with perfect certainty, that if the ſyſtem of an accumulating fund, which the legiſlature adopted a few years ago, had been adopted at the Revolution, it would have paid the expences of all the wars ſince, and left the nation without a farthing of debt. It follows, therefore, that at the end of another century, if our wars are not more expenſive than thoſe of the laſt, and the ſyſtem of the accumulating fund is adhered to, we ſhall not be more in debt than at preſent.

It is true, that a parliament, or a convention made up of fools, atheiſts, or public robbers, might, with one ſtroke of a pen, aboliſh all the national debt, and ſet the people free from all the taxes which are neceſſary to pay the intereſt of it. But malice itſelf could not deviſe a meaſure ſo ruinous to the nation. A private man who becomes bankrupt, while he is able to pay his debts, is juſtly conſidered as one of the worſt of villains. And what could the world think of that nation, which ſhould follow

follow his example? Who would ever truſt us again, if again we ſhould need to borrow? Or how ſhould we anſwer to the judge of all the earth, for ſuch a breach of public faith, ſuch an act of diſhoneſty and fraud, as the world never yet witneſſed, till France ſhewed them lately the example? Not only would the public creditors, both at home and abroad, be ruined; but all credit would be ruined with them, all property ſunk to nothing, and every individual in the nation reduced to beggary. The value of land would be reduced to a mere trifle. A whole eſtate might be purchaſed for leſs than what is now its yearly rent: and none would be found to buy it. Trade and manufactures would ceaſe; for no man would be able to carry them on, becauſe none would have confidence to truſt another. Tradeſmen and labourers would neither have work nor wages. One private bank, in a remote corner of Scotland (at Air) failed a few years ago, and how many, in different parts of Britain, were ruined by that means? A few private houſes have failed, ſince the month of April 1793, and how many have felt the ſhock? The South Sea ſcheme is not yet forgotten: but though all the property that ever belonged to the South-Sea company, had been ſunk in the pacific ocean, what was that to the ſinking of almoſt three hundred millions, now in the Britiſh funds? Though the whole iſland were ſwallowed up by the ſea, and all the inhabitants caſt naked upon the deſerts of America, it would ſcarcely prove a greater calamity.

Nothing can be more reaſonable, than that all who enjoy the protection of government, ſhould contribute, according to their ability, for its ſupport. And the benefits that we derive from the Britiſh government, are more than a compenſation for all the taxes we pay. Are we not indebted to government, for the preſervation

and

and ſecurity of all that we poſſeſs; and all that we hold dear in the world? Our perſons, our wives, our children, our liberty, and all our property, if it were not for the interference of government, would ſoon become a prey to the lawleſs and diſobedient; and probably ſome of thoſe men, who are now moſt diligent in telling us, that we are oppreſſed by government, a thing that we ſhould never have ſuſpected, if they had not told us, would then become our plunderers, and oppreſſors indeed. The time is not yet diſtant, when in many parts of our country, we were obliged to pay contributions to public robbers, who lived by ſpoil and rapine, for the ſafety of what they were pleaſed to leave us. And ſhall we think it an hardſhip, to pay, at leaſt, an equal proportion, for the ſupport of that government, under whoſe wings we dwell ſafely, every one in quiet poſſeſſion of his paternal inheritance, or of the fruits of his own induſtry; or to expreſs it in the language of the prophet, we *dwell, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none to make us afraid?*

ESSAY VIII.

On the PRESENT War, and the STAGNATION of CREDIT, as connected with it.

EVERY man who has either the reaſon or the feelings of humanity, will be convinced, without arguments, that war is a bad thing: and ought to be avoided, as long as it can be avoided, without incurring a greater evil. Every Chriſtian, in Britain, or in Europe, will earneſtly deſire a ſpeedy termination of the preſent war, and pray for it. He will even look forward, with ardent longing, and with a lively hope, to that bleſſed period, when nation will no more lift up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more. But it muſt be allowed, both by Chriſtians and others, that there are ſome caſes, when war is both lawful and neceſſary. And after all the outcry that is made againſt the preſent war, and all the ſcurrilous abuſe that has been poured out upon Government, for engaging in it, and for continuing it, I am perſuaded, that if ever Britain, ſince ſhe became one nation, was engaged in any war, that could be juſtified, upon the principles of juſtice, of policy, of religion, or even of neceſſity, the preſent is that war.

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This war was neceſſary, to maintain inviolate the public faith, and fulfil thoſe treaties, by which the nation has been bound, for almoſt two centuries back. It has long been known to all Europe, that by the treaty of 1609 whereby the Dutch were ſet free from the yoke of Spaniſh deſpotiſm, and acknowledged an independent ſtate, the navigation of the Scheld and the Meuſe, was given up to them. And this treaty was guaranteed, both by France and England. It is as well known, though it has not been known ſo long, that the French convention, on the 21ſt of Nov. 1792, ſent an order to their general, enjoining him, to take every meaſure, for opening a free navigation of the Scheldt and the Meuſe: and that this order was executed, to the utmoſt of their power. If France, becauſe ſhe changed her government, thought herſelf free from thoſe engagements, by which the nation had ſo long been bound, ſurely that was no ſufficient reaſon, why Britain ſhould violate her faith in the ſame manner. If the treaties of nations are not binding, individuals may likewiſe violate their obligations, aſſoon as they have it in their power: and then the foundations of all ſocial intercourſe are diſſolved. Our patriots acknowledge, that by this meaſure, the trade of Amſterdam would have been ruined; "but," ſay they, "the merchants of Amſterdam would "have removed to Antwerp, and their trade would "have followed them." This is juſt as if the convention ſhould alſo take poſſeſſion of the navigation of the Thames, and then tell us, "We do you no injury: to "be ſure we ruin the trade of London; but what of "that? Your merchants have only to come over to Pa-"ris, and there they may find that trade, which they "can no longer carry on in their own country."

"But that antiquated treaty was inconſiſtent with "the

" the rights of man, and therefore, is not to be regard-
" ed. Are not all rivers free? Has not every nation,
" and every perſon an equal right to the element of wa-
" ter, to uſe and occupy it as he pleaſes?" Perhaps it may appear ſo by the new philoſophy; but mankind, hitherto, has never thought ſo: nor has the practice of nations been ever conformable to that doctrine. Rivers, while they continue within the territories of any ſtate, have ever been conſidered as belonging to that ſtate, and ſubject to that authority by which it is governed, as much as the land on either ſide of them. Yea, aſk any private gentleman, through whoſe eſtate a river flows, and he will tell you, that he conſiders the fiſhing on that river, as his property, in the ſame manner as the adjacent fields, unleſs barred by a previous contract. How would Britain take it, if the convention ſhould tell her, that they have the ſame right as ſhe has, to the navigation of the Forth or the Thames? Will the French allow to Holland an equal right with themſelves, to navigate the Seine and the Loire? Are not narrow ſeas, as well as rivers, conſidered as ſubject to thoſe ſtates, whoſe dominions ly on both ſides of them? Does not the king of Denmark levy a toll on all ſhips that paſs the Sound? Have ever any of the nations of Europe demanded it as their right, that the Turks ſhould open the navigation of the Straits of the Dardanelles? And was it not after a long and bloody ſtruggle, that Ruſſia obtained a ſhare in the navigation of the Black Sea? Why then ſhould not the people of Holland have the ſame right to the navigation of their own rivers? And if Britain has engaged to defend that right, how could ſhe ſee it invaded, and ſit ſtill?

" But," ſay they " the Dutch were not aſking our
" protection in that cauſe: and ſurely it was ſoon e-
nough,

" nough, to enter into a war on their account, when " they applied to us for that purpoſe." And, pray, who told you that they did not apply? Are all the ſecret negociations of the courts and cabinets of Europe to be found in the *Edinburgh Gazetteer?* Suppoſing that they did not apply to us, that was no ſufficient reaſon why we ſhould not have given them aſſiſtance. Should I, in paſſing through the ſtreets, come up to a puny republican, of four feet high, engaged with ſome brawny ariſtocrate, who held him by the throat with the one hand, and was ready to knock out his brains with the other; would it be my duty to paſs on, without attempting to reſcue him, on pretence that he did not call to me for aſſiſtance? Should I do ſo, he would probably never call out more. This was preciſely the caſe, between France and Holland. The Dutch, taken by ſurprize, and in a ſtate of confuſion among themſelves, knew that they were no match for France. They proteſted againſt the invaſion of their rights: but they durſt do no more, till they had a proſpect of ſome effectual aſſiſtance. And if Britain had not ſtept in to her relief, it is probable, that Holland had been an 86th department of France, before ſhe could have made a formal demand of the ſtipulated aſſiſtance.

The war was proper, and neceſſary, to preſerve the balance of power in Europe. Was it ever conſidered as unwarrantable, for King William or Queen Anne, to make war upon France, with a view to reſtrain the ambition of Lewis XIV. and put a ſtop to the conqueſts he projected? And was it not as dangerous to Europe, for a French convention to acquire univerſal dominion, as if it had been a French monarch? They ſaid, indeed, they meant not conqueſt, but fraternity. But was not their fraternization a real conqueſt, whatever name

" they

they gave it? Would not France have received a greater acceſſion of ſtrength, by the fraternization of the Auſtrian Netherlands, had it continued, than ſhe would if Lewis had conquered them? Were they not of more uſe to France, when enjoying the privileges of native citizens, than they would have been, if kept under by force, as a conquered people? Had the convention any better right to make them citizens by an armed force, than Lewis had to make them his ſubjects? Or had Britain, or the other allied powers leſs reaſon to prevent France from becoming a too powerful neighbour, becauſe, inſtead of being enſlaved by one tyrant, ſhe was ridden by a whole convention?

Our own ſafety required that Britain ſhould engage in the preſent war. I ſhall ſay little of the danger, to which we were expoſed, through the attempts of French emiſſaries, to pervert the minds of the Britiſh people, and to excite them to ſubvert the government. That ſuch attempts were made has been denied; and from the nature of the thing, it muſt be difficult to prove it: though, I believe, never any perſon denied it, but ſuch as were, either directly or indirectly, under their influence. Neither ſhall I ſay much of thoſe congratulatory addreſſes, that were ſent to the French convention, by clubs or ſocieties, in London, Rocheſter, Dundee, and other parts of Britain, or the preſents of cannon, and other military implements, that were made them; becauſe no cognizance has ever been taken of theſe things by any court of juſtice: though, I have no doubt, that if ſuch things had happened in ſome former periods, the authors of them would have been ſubjected to the penalties of a *præmunire*. But the reception given to theſe addreſſes in France, was a clear evidence, that they wiſhed, and even expected the fraternization of Britiſh ſubjects, as well

well as of our allies on the continent. Nor ſhall I inſiſt upon Dumourier's declaration, that after overrunning Holland, he would dine in London by a certain day. That was only the raving of a man, whoſe brain was turned by a temporary ſucceſs. But all theſe things, taken together, afford, at leaſt a ſtrong preſumption, that Britain had reaſon to arm in her own defence.

But we have much ſtronger evidence of this, than all theſe afford. Did not the French convention, on the 19th of November 1792, adopt a decree, by which they declared, "in the name of the French nation, that they "will grant fraternity and aſſiſtance to all thoſe people, "who wiſh to procure liberty?" And what was this, but that they would aſſiſt all diſcontented perſons, to throw off ſubjection to the governments under which they lived, in every nation; and particularly in Britain, where they well knew how many had been rendered diſcontented, by the ſcandalous writings of ſome of themſelves? Was not the decree propoſed by *Cambon*, adopted by the convention, and ſent to their generals by extraordinary couriers, Dec. 15th 1792, a plain declaration of war, againſt all kings, and againſt all people who ſhould ſubmit to them, or ſo much as negociate with them? Their words are, "The French nation declares, "that it will conſider as enemies, all thoſe people, who "refuſing liberty, ſhall enter into accommodation, or "negociation with their tyrants." And we know, that, with them, as well as with their friends among ourſelves, kings and tyrants are ſynonymous terms. Had Britain ſtood aloof, and ſuffered them to go on, as they were doing at that time, what muſt have been the conſequence? They had pick'd a quarrel with Holland, though ſhe had no king, about the navigation of her rivers. As ſoon as that had been ſettled to their mind,

they

they would have had a ſimilar quarrel with Britain, about the navigation of the open ſeas; for they ſay, that, by the navigation act, Britain has tyrannized over France, ever ſince it was made. And their addreſſers in Britain would have made them very welcome; perhaps it would not have been long, when they would have ſent them an invitation, to come over and deliver us from a hereditary monarch, that coſt the nation a million annually, and to eſtabliſh among us that ſort of liberty and equality which now ſubſiſts among themſelves.

"Yes" ſay our democrates, "That was the true "cauſe of the war. The court of Britain, and all the "courts of Europe, were afraid, that if the French "ſhould ſucceed, all the people of Europe would have "followed their example: liberty and equality would "have triumphed every where, and kings and tyranny "would have become extinct." Yes, ſay we again, and, though there had been no other cauſe for it, the war is juſt and neceſſary. The extinction of kings is the deſtruction of the Britiſh conſtitution: and French liberty and equality include anarchy, deſpotiſm, maſſacre, atheiſm, and every abomination. To prevent the entry of theſe among us, and to preſerve our conſtitution, I truſt Britons will ever conſider as a ſufficient cauſe, for going to war with all the world.

Sympathy for the French themſelves called aloud upon Britain to enter into the war. All Europe ſaw, that the whole French nation, from the king to the meaneſt peaſant, had embraced the conſtitution of 1791. All whoſe eyes were not blinded with prejudice ſaw, that the Jacobine Club, and the commune of Paris ſoon became weary of that conſtitution, and were determined upon the extinction of royalty. Whatever they or their convention ſay to the contrary, every impartial perſon knows,

that

that this was the true ſpring of the horrors of the 20th of June, the 10th of Auguſt, and the 3d of September *. When the national aſſembly prudently diſſolved themſelves, and called a general convention, Europe ſaw with aſtoniſhment, men choſen into that convention, from the dregs of the people, of the moſt infamous characters, the moſt depraved morals, and the moſt abandoned principles. We ſaw theſe men adopting the views of the mob, and of the Jacobines, overturning the conſtitution by the roots, murdering their king, confiſcating the property of their fellow ſubjects, and dooming them to periſh by martial law, for no other crime, but flying their country to ſave their life. We have ſeen them aboliſhing Chriſtianity; giving their ſanction to polygamy, adultery, and inceſt; deſtroying all true liberty, all ſecurity for life or property, and all law but their own will; and butchering almoſt one half of their own number, without ever a perſon being choſen to fill up the places which have ſo become vacant. We have ſeen revolutions following upon revolutions, maſſacres upon maſſacres, and France turned into a common ſhambles for the human ſpecies. All this while, no man durſt open a mouth, or breathe a whiſper, againſt the ruling party. But can it be ſuppoſed that a whole nation is ſo far infatuated as to approve of ſuch meaſures? It is manifeſt that they do not: as appears from the frequent inſurrections, and pretended plots againſt the republic. Is it fit that Britain, or any generous nation, ſhould ſit ſtill, and not lend her aſſiſtance, to deliver that people, from the infernal clutches of ſuch a band of robbers?

"But what has Britain to do with the internal go-

"vernment

* See Moore's journal during a reſidence in France, lately publiſhed.

"vernment of France? Has not that nation the ſame "right as any other, to regulate their own government; "and to give it what form they pleaſe?" A people who have no government among them, have, no doubt, a right to ſet up what form of government they pleaſe: and it muſt be confeſſed, that France is very nearly in that condition. But how ſhall the French people chooſe a form of government for themſelves, in their preſent diſtracted ſtate? The laſt thing that could be called the deed of that nation, was the acceptance of the conſtitution of 1791. A hereditary limited monarchy was the government that the nation then choſe. That choice Britain made no objections to. She continued her connections with France, from the firſt revolution to the 10th of Auguſt 1792, without ever taking notice of her change of government, or any of her internal tranſactions. But the government of France was totally overturned on that day of horrors, by an armed mob from the ſuburbs of Paris. And every thing has been managed, ſince that day, by the influence of that mob, and according to the will of their leaders. Till the voice of the nation can be heard, Britain, and all the reſt of the world, have a right to conſider the conſtitution of 1791, as a ſtanding deed: and in attempting to reſtore ſuch a monarchy as was ſettled by that deed, Britain is only ſupporting the choice of that nation againſt a ſavage banditti, by whom the nation are kept in cruel bondage. The court of Britain always diſclaimed any intention of meddling with the internal affairs of France, and continues to diſclaim it. In the king's ſpeech, at the opening of the Parliament, Dec. 13th 1792, he ſays, "I have "uniformly abſtained from any interference, with re"ſpect to the internal affairs of France." And in his late declaration he ſtill expreſſes the ſame ſentiments.

In

In Lord Hood's negociations with the inhabitants of Toulon, no mention is made, on either ſide, of reſtoring abſolute monarchy. They expreſs their unanimous wiſh "to adopt a monarchic government, as it was o-"riginally, *by the conſtituent aſſembly of* 1789." And upon that condition his Lordſhip takes them under the protection of Britain. Durſt he have done ſo, if he had not known, that it would be agreeable to his maſter? Or has ever the court found fault with him on that account? Britain, I hope, will not lay down her arms, till ſome ſort of government is eſtabliſhed in France, in which ſhe can confide, and with which ſhe can treat, in ſome hope that public faith will be kept. In treating with the preſent convention ſhe can have no ſuch hope. When that convention met, the *Girondiſt* party prevailed, and *Danton* and his *Mountain* were held in contempt. Now this laſt faction is the whole convention; the other have all either ſuffered by the guillotine, or are now in priſon, waiting their turn of that uſeful inſtrument. Were a treaty now concluded with the convention, another faction may riſe up, Danton, Robeſpierre, and Legendre may likewiſe expiate their crimes on a ſcaffold, all that they have done may be diſclaimed, and Britain may be forced to arm herſelf anew*. But, that ever our court intended, to reſtore abſolute monarchy, or by force to oblige France to receive any form of government whatever, no impartial man will believe.

But, abſtracting from all this, Britain was laid under an abſolute neceſſity of entering into the preſent war, in order to repell the hoſtilities of the French, and defend herſelf againſt their attacks. Britain took no part in the campaign of 1792. Nor had ſhe any fixed purpoſe

of

* Since the above was written, Danton alſo has ſuffered by the guillotine.

of entering into the diſpute, till the convention forced her to it, by an actual declaration of war, both againſt Britain and Holland, and an embargo laid upon all our ſhips in their ports, on the 1ſt of Feb. 1793. All this was accompanied with a moſt inſolent attempt, to detach the people of Britain from the government, and excite them to take their part againſt it: in that they declared themſelves in a ſtate of war, not with the Britiſh nation, but with the king *of England*, and the *Stadtholder of the United Provinces*. Would the friends of the people really have wiſhed Britain to ſit ſtill, and ſee her ſhips taken, her trade ruined, her country invaded, her government ſubverted, one half of her ſubjects fraternized, that is, made ſubjects of France, and the other half proſcribed, without taking any meaſures to prevent it? Surely if adminiſtration had taken ſuch a courſe, they would have deſerved all the execrations, with which our pſeudo-patriots load them.

"But, though France was firſt in declaring war, Bri-
"tain was the real aggreſſor: as we had for ſome time
"before, purſued meaſures hoſtile to France, and plain-
"ly ſhewed our intention of making war upon her."
So ſpeak our democrates: and they mention chiefly three things, as indicating ſuch an intention. 1ſt, The recalling of our ambaſſador after the 10th of Auguſt. But our ambaſſador was ſent to the court of France, as ſtanding upon the conſtitution of 1791. On that fatal day, the government of France was diſſolved: and the ambaſſador's commiſſion expired of courſe. The king might have ſent him new credentials, but to whom? The national aſſembly had ſeaſonably diſſolved themſelves. The preſent convention was called, not for the purpoſe of adminiſtration, nor yet properly for legiſlation, but merely to ſettle the form of government, and

give to France a new conſtitution; ſo that, excepting that, all that they have done has been mere uſurpation. To whom, then, ſhould Britain have ſent an ambaſſador, ſince Lord Gower's recall? 2d, Britain's refuſing to acknowledge, or to treat with their ambaſſador, is mentioned as another act of hoſtility. But the ſame reaſons that juſtify the former ſtep, ſerve alſo to juſtify this. If we could not ſend an ambaſſador to them, ſurely neither could we receive one from them. Yet, though he was not received in a public character, he was ſuffered to remain in London, till the ſhocking news arrived of the king's murder. His papers were received: and anſwers were given into his hand, in which Britain made known her demands, and the terms, on which ſhe was willing to continue in peace, even with the convention. And all the anſwer we received was the above declaration of war. 3d, The Alien Bill has been repreſented as an act of hoſtility, which France had ground to reſent. But, in that caſe, all other nations had the ſame provocation; for no hardſhip was laid upon French citizens, more than upon other foreigners. It was the opinion of ſome of our beſt lawyers, that ſuch an act was needleſs; becauſe, without it, adminiſtration had power to have done all that it enacted. Indeed, it would ſeem, that foreigners were ſubjected to little more hardſhip by that act, than Britiſh ſubjects are liable to by exiſting laws. I am no Frenchman; but I ſuſpect, that if I ſhould appear in London, or even in Edinburgh, and not be able to give an account of myſelf, or of the buſineſs upon which I came, I would be liable to be puniſhed as a vagrant. It will not be denied, that the reaſon of paſſing that act, was the danger to which the nation was expoſed, from the attempts of French emiſſaries, to ſpread ſeditious principles, and to excite ſeditious practices,

tices, among the people. And I know it has been ſaid that this danger was imaginary, and no ſuch attempts were made. But, if it was ſo, why ſhould the convention, or their friends in Britain, have reſented the meaſure? For they were only perſons of the above deſcription, that could ſuffer any hardſhip by it; unleſs it was a hardſhip to tell who they were, and whence they came.

How it came to be aſſerted, that this war was undertaken by the combined powers, in ſupport of the Popiſh religion, I cannot underſtand; unleſs it be, that the leaders of the faction hope, by that means, to engage on their ſide, ſome zealous Proteſtants, who would otherwiſe have taken no part in the cauſe. All the world muſt know, that religion has never been mentioned in the quarrel. And if it had, all the world ſees, that it is not *Popery*, but *Chriſtianity*, to which the convention have declared themſelves enemies.

As to what they ſay, about putting an end to the war, and withdrawing our troops, now that the invaſions of the French are repelled, and they driven back into their own country, it ſcarcely deſerves an anſwer. If any farmer in the country ſhould find his neighbour's cattle among a field of his corn, which they had completely deſtroyed, would he content himſelf with driving them over the march, and go home and leave them there without a keeper? Would he not expect both ſome reparation for the damage, and ſome ſecurity that they would not come back? The application is obvious. If the combined armies were withdrawn, a month would not paſs, when the French armies would be back where they were this time laſt year. Did ever our friends hear of any war, that was deſerted in that manner, or was ended any otherwiſe than by a treaty of peace? And what nation, that has any regard, either to her

her dignity or her credit, will enter into any treaty with a band of murderers?

What is thought the ſtrongeſt objection againſt the preſent war, is drawn from its ſuppoſed influence upon credit in the nation; and the ſtagnation of trade and manufactures, that it is ſaid to have occaſioned. It muſt be allowed that every war muſt affect trade: as it muſt raiſe the price of inſurance, and oblige trading ſhips to wait for convoys. Nor will it be denied that the preſent war may have contributed ſomething to the ſudden ſhock ſuſtained by credit and by trade in this country ſince its commencement. Since the eſtabliſhment of the commercial treaty with France, a number of our merchants and manufacturers have had large commiſſions from that country. When the war broke out, ſuch demands ceaſed of courſe: they wanted their money for what they had ſent over, and probably will never recover it. But many of our remittances from France were in goods. And we might have goods from them, that were not paid for, at the commencement of the war, as well as they had from us. No man, that knows any thing of the extent of our trade, can believe, that ſuch a ſhock as credit has ſuſtained, could ever have proceeded from a total ſtoppage of all the intercourſe that ever we had with France. And evidence may be produced, ſufficient to ſatisfy any unbiaſſed mind, that the failures which have taken place among us, were not owing, in any great degree, to the war; but to other cauſes, which, in a very ſhort time, would have produced the ſame effect, though we had continued to enjoy profound peace. My reaſons for thinking ſo are the following.

1ſt, A committee appointed by the Houſe of Commons, to enquire into the cauſes of theſe failures, gave this as the reſult of their inquiries. This committee

was

was not all taken from one ſide of the houſe: there were among them members in the oppoſition, as well as members in the intereſt of government. Some of them were men as much acquainted with matters of trade, as any in the nation. And they doubtleſs had means of information, that no private perſon can have. Much credit, therefore, muſt be due to their report, on that head.

2d, Such failures were not confined to Britain; but took place, to an equal extent, in other countries, that had no concern in the war. Did we not hear of one houſe in Warſaw, that failed for no leſs a ſum than three millions ſterling, about the ſame time when our own failures began? And Poland, at that time, had neither war nor diſturbance, nor any proſpect of either. Were there not likewiſe capital failures in Venice, Genoa, and other trading places? And every perſon concerned in trade can tell, that he knows as little whom to truſt, among his correſpondents abroad, as among thoſe at home. How could our going to war produce ſuch effects among all the nations of Europe?

3d, Our failures took place, and that almoſt to the whole extent, before it was poſſible that credit could be affected by the war. Before the American war commenced, our trade with that country was much more extenſive than ever our trade with France has been: and an immediate ſtop was put to it, by their non-importation agreements. The American war hurt our trade more than any other war ever did. But the effects of it were ſcarcely felt, till the year 1779, four years after it began; when France and Spain had joined the confederacy againſt us. Laſt year, the failures began within ten days after the war was reſolved upon. If our trade ſupported itſelf during four years of the moſt diſaſtrous

war that ever Britain ſaw, how can any man believe that it could have ſuffered ſo much by this war, within a few months, during which we had nothing but a train of unexampled ſucceſs?

4th, The war with France continues: nor is there any more appearance of its coming to an end, than there was when it firſt commenced. Yet the country is already beginning to recover from the ſhock it ſuſtained. Credit begins to be re-eſtabliſhed: trade revives apace: many of the hands, that had been diſcharged by manufacturers in different places, are again employed: our ſtaple commodities, particularly wool and cattle, are riſing in their prices: and there is reaſon to hope, that, in a little time, our ſituation, in this reſpect, will be equal to what it was before. Now, is it probable, that this ſhould be the caſe while the war continues, if the war had been the ſole cauſe of the failures; or if it had any conſiderable influence upon them?

There is all reaſon to think, that the true cauſe of moſt of theſe failures, was the very flouriſhing ſtate of our manufactures and trade. Multitudes, in that line, ſtretched themſelves beyond their capital, in hopes of growing ſuddenly rich. When demands came to be made upon them, that they did not expect, they could not anſwer them. They were therefore under the neceſſity of giving up their affairs, into the hands of their creditors. Their goods were, of courſe, ſold below value, and their creditors were loſers; though perhaps, if time had been allowed them, they might have ſatisfied all demands, and had a conſiderable ſurplus. People in trade were connected with one another: one failure produced two or three more; and ſo on, till our papers were filled with bankruptcies. Trade and manufactures were at a ſtand: not becauſe there was no

demand, but becauſe confidence was gone, and no man knew whom he might truſt. But, as ſoon as things come to ſettle, and it is known who may be depended on, trade and manufactures, and public confidence, will be reſtored to their former ſtate, whether the war continues or not. And every one will, at length, be convinced, that the war was no principal cauſe of the ſtagnation.

It is almoſt unneceſſary to mention the malicious inſinuation of ſome, that theſe failures were purpoſely brought about by government, partly by means of the war, and partly by the bank of England's refuſing to diſcount bills; in order to break the ſpirit of the people; and prevent their making thoſe efforts in the cauſe of liberty, that they otherwiſe would have done. Is it credible that government would have firſt ruined credit of purpoſe, and then given five millions to ſupport it? I will not ſay, that the whole was a manœuvre of thoſe in oppoſition to government; who, by an unneceſſary run upon private banking houſes, brought about thoſe failures of purpoſe, that they might bring an odium upon the war, and upon the meaſures of government. Though the one aſſertion would be quite as probable as the other.

Since the war was to take place, and likewiſe the ſtagnation of trade, it was a happy circumſtance, both for government and for the country, that they took place at one and the ſame time. On the one hand, if the manufactures had been in a flouriſhing ſtate, and all hands employed, government would have found no ſmall difficulty in procuring the neceſſary recruits for the war. On the other hand, had the ſtagnation of trade happened in the time of peace, multitudes of people, that had been employed in the manufactures, when deprived of work, would

would have wanted the means of ſubſiſtence, and either muſt have ſtarved, or become an uſeleſs burden on the country. Now many of theſe have an opportunity of enjoying the means of life, and of being uſeful to their country by enliſting in the army. Thus has the providence of God made the one of theſe evils an antidote againſt the other.

It is likewiſe urged againſt the preſent war, that it is impoſſible it can be ſucceſsful. 'The French,' we are told, 'poſſeſs incredible reſources. They have plenty 'of money: all their men, from 16 to 60 years of age, 'are in a ſtate of requiſition, trained to arms, and ready 'to join their armies, and filled with enthuſiaſm in the 'cauſe. The Combined Powers have as yet made very 'little progreſs in France: and it will never be in their 'power to ſubdue 25 millions of people.' What the ſucceſs of this, or any other war may be, muſt depend upon the ſovereign diſpoſals of the *Lord of Hoſts*; and can neither be foreſeen nor predicted by men.—But if we judge by human probability, the Combined Powers have no reaſon to deſpair of ſucceſs. Of the 25 millions of people, of whom France boaſted, not one fourth could ever be, at one time, capable to bear arms. Of theſe, how many have periſhed, within theſe two years, by the war, by maſſacres, and by the guillotine? How many are in a ſtate of baniſhment, and taking part with the Allies? And how many would willingly take part againſt the Convention, if they durſt? Money indeed has not yet failed them; but it is drawn from pillage and confiſcation, the plunder of private property, and the ruin of every real ſource of public wealth. This fund of rapine, great as it is, will ſoon be exhauſted; and where will they find a new ſupply?—Their expences, if accounts from themſelves may be credited, amount to 12 millions

millions ſterling per month, or 144 millions in one year. Surely all the property that they have left in France will not long ſupply them at that rate.

It is true, they can raiſe multitudes of men, by forcing all that are able to bear arms to be *volunteers* in the cauſe. But the Combined Powers can likewiſe arm the Peaſantry in their reſpective countries, if reduced to that neceſſity: Some of them have already begun to do ſo; and ſurely there are not more men in France, than in all thoſe countries together. If all their men were employed in the war, who will cultivate the ground? And who will fabricate their cloathes and implements of war? A famine muſt neceſſarily enſue: and their armies, as well as the women and children left at home, muſt periſh for want. How far they are already verging towards this condition, themſelves beſt know. But if it is not ſo, in a very conſiderable degree, the world is much deceived.

If we may judge of future ſucceſs by what is paſt, we have ſtill good reaſon to hope. Since Britain entered into the war, the Conventioniſts have been driven out of Holland and Flanders; the allied armies have penetrated into France, and taken a number of their fortified places. We have deſtroyed their naval force in the Mediteranean, and taken the whole Iſland of Corſica, except Baſtia, which, if not taken, is now cloſely beſieged. We have taken all that they poſſeſſed in the Eaſt-Indies; and all their Weſt-India poſſeſſions, except a ſmall part of one Iſland. In theſe ſucceſſes Britain has had a principal ſhare, and Britain is like to reap the principal advantage; as all their poſſeſſions in the Eaſt and Weſt Indies, have been ſubdued by our arms, and are in our poſſeſſion. Some of the allied armies have, now and then, received a check: and when was there ever a war, where the ſucceſs was all on one ſide? But, for ſundry centuries back,

back, there has been no inſtance of equal ſucceſs in ſo ſhort a time.

If our ſucceſs had been leſs, that is no reaſon why we ſhould deſert the cauſe. Events muſt be left to an all-governing Providence; and we all know that Divine Providence often permits wicked men to have ſucceſs in ſin. Neither is that party always ſucceſsful in the iſſue, that had moſt ſucceſs in the beginning of a war. The children of Benjamin were ſucceſsful in two battles, againſt all the other tribes of Iſrael; and in the third, they were almoſt exterminated*. And every one verſed in the Britiſh Hiſtory knows, that, in moſt of our conteſts with France, France was ſucceſsful in the beginning, though, in the iſſue, Britain was triumphant. It is not by the proſpect of ſucceſs, but by the juſtice of the cauſe, that our judgement ſhould be formed. And when the conduct and complexion of the preſent rulers of France are conſidered, rather than Britain ſhould enter into any treaty or alliance with them, every true friend of order, of juſtice, of religion, or of his country, would wiſh to have war with them, as *Iſrael* had with *Amalek, from generation to generation.*

* Judges, chap. xx.

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CONCLUSION.

THE above Eſſays were written in the months of December 1793, and January 1794. The delay of their publication has been owing to various circumſtances, in which the Public are not intereſted. The changes that have taken place both at home and abroad may have diminiſhed the force, or perhaps obſcured the meaning of ſome expreſſions, which contained an alluſion to the ſtate of affairs at that time. But nothing has happened tending to invalidate any part of the reaſoning; on the contrary every new occurence has ſerved to confirm it.

Though the puniſhments inflicted upon ſome of the ringleaders of ſedition, ought to have awed their abettors into quietneſs, and ſeemed for a time to have done ſo; it now appears, that they have only ſerved to render them more daring; and their machinations, though more ſecretly carried on, have become more dangerous than ever. The diſcoveries lately made by government are not yet ſo public, as to warrant a diſcuſſion of them in this place; but, from what is univerſally known, the following things are as manifeſt as noon-day, 1ſt. That

our

our Britiſh Conventioniſts did not mean to ſeek reform in any Conſtitutional way; but their Reform, whatever it was, muſt have been accompliſhed by force. 2*dly*. That what they aimed at was not merely a Reform of the Houſe of Commons, but a total ſubverſion of the Conſtitution; by ſubſtituting a Convention in place of all the three branches of the Legiſlature; and veſting in it the whole power of the nation, both Legiſlative and Executive. In a word, it was, to have Britain reduced to the ſame condition with France. 3*dly*. That they did not mean to attempt the execution of their infernal plan, by a manly and open declaration of war againſt their Country, or againſt the ruling Powers, but by a ſudden inſurrection, and maſſacre of all whom they conſidered as hoſtile to to their deſigns, or capable of oppoſing them with effect. Of this we have a ſufficient proof, in the form of the weapons with which they had begun to provide themſelves. They were ſo conſtructed, that a perſon might conceal them, in his boſom, or in his pocket, till the moment when they were to be uſed. And had not Providence brought to light their plot, it is more than probable, that the friends of good order and government, might have been murdered in the ſtreets, or in their own houſes, before they had ſuſpected any danger. *Bleſſed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth.*

It will not ſurprize any one, and I truſt it will convince very few, that theſe intentions are ſtill diſclaimed by that party, and even denied by ſome in parliament, who, though they now diſclaim membership in theſe ſocieties, have never appeared great enemies to their meaſures. But it is curious to obſerve how thoſe men have always denied that any thing dangerous to the conſtitution was intended by theſe ſocieties: and now, when introvertible evidence

evidence of the fact is laid before parliament, they attempt to turn all into ridicule, by saying that nothing is now discovered, but what was known six months ago. If *they* knew six months ago, of the treasonable practices, which are now come to light, how can they be answerable to their own consciences, to God, or to their country, for concealing them so long?

It is equally curious to hear them arguing that, because the severities hitherto used have not been sufficient to restrain such practices, therefore no further severities ought to be used; but government should now try what lenity and forbearance will do. Is not this the same, as if a man who is council for a criminal, before a court of justice, should deliver himself in the following manner? "All the rigour of the laws made against robbery "and murder, and all the severity exercised, in the exe- "cution of these laws, have never yet been able prevent "the commission of those crimes. Instead, therefore, "of a more vigorous execution of the laws, the proper "method for abolishing such crimes, will be to dis- "annull all laws against them, to suffer criminals to en- "joy impunity, and to give an universal toleration to mur- "der and robbery." Men who argue in this manner are surely reduced to their last shift.

FRIENDS, COUNTRYMEN, AND FELLOW CHRISTIANS,

Permit me, as a true friend of the people, a lover of the peace and order of society, a servant and ambassador of the Prince of peace, to address you in the words of truth and soberness. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness;* nor suffer yourselves to be imposed upon by the *good words, and fair speeches of men that ly in wait to deceive.* The political constitution, under which you have the happiness to live, is the best that human wisdom ever yet devised. The privileges that you enjoy,

under

under its protection, are ſuch as no other nation under heaven poſſeſſes. The evils to which you are ſubject are common to mankind every where: no government can prevent them. While men continue to be friends, and while a juſt and holy God is the ſupreme judge of all the earth, it will never be poſſible to ſet mortals free from thoſe miſeries which ſin brings along with it. You may change one miſery for another: or, by ſtruggling againſt them, you may render your miſeries more heavy; but never, in this world, can you hope for exemption from the common evils of life. But why ſhould theſe be imputed to the government under which you live? We may appeal to you, in behalf of government, as Samuel did to the people of Iſrael in his own behalf: Whoſe ox, or whoſe aſs have they taken? whom have they defrauded? whom have they oppreſſed? Can you ſoberly lay your hand on your heart, and ſay, that you have ſuffered any thing, in your perſon, in your property, in your liberty, or in your juſt rights, by their hands?

The ſpecious names of liberty, equality, and the rights of men, are employed, by deſigning men, to ſeduce you into practices ſubverſive of all liberty, and of the moſt valuable rights both of God and man. Divine Providence has now pulled off the maſk, by which your ſeducers attempted to cover their deſigns; and it is plain that they aim at nothing leſs than the total ſubverſion of the Britiſh conſtitution; and the introduction of a republican government, upon the model of that (if government it can be called), which now ſubſiſts in France. But if that could be effected without bloodſhed, and with the free concurrence of the whole nation, the whole nation would ſoon repent of the change. A mere republican government, in a great nation, muſt neceſſarily be the government of a few demagogues; who, having both the

legiſlative

legiſlative and executive power in their hands, can be ſubject to no controul; but the liberty and the property of every perſon in the nation, muſt be ſubject to their arbitrary diſpoſal.

But you will be ſatisfied, that the great body of the nation are againſt this change: and if ever the ſchemes of our pretended reformers are executed, it muſt be through a deluge of blood, and after the moſt violent convulſions, through all the horrors of civil war, and thoſe new horrors which France has invented. We alſo muſt have our revolutionary tribunals, our maſſacres, and our guillotines. Our land muſt be uncultivated; our trade and manufactures muſt ceaſe; and pinching famine will conſume the few whom the ſword could not deſtroy. Can you think of imbrewing your hands in the blood of your friends or brothers, of your fathers, or your own children? Can you lead thoſe to the ſcaffold, with whom you once joined ſweet counſel as you went to the houſe of God in companies? All this you muſt reſolve on, if you will adhere to theſe deſperate men, and join in the proſecution of their ſchemes. You have no alternative left, unleſs to be yourſelves put to death for refuſing to go all lengths with them.

That political enthuſiaſm, by which the minds of ſome are influenced, may perhaps carry them through all this: they may outbrave the juſtice of their country; they might alſo meet death with a confidence worthy of a better cauſe; but that enthuſiaſm will carry them no further. It has been clearly proved, that ſeditious and treaſonable practices are as contrary to the law of God, as they are to the laws of men. And after ſuffering all the puniſhments human laws can inflict, they muſt anſwer for the ſame crimes before the dread tribunal of God. There, the films of prejudice will fall from their eyes;

eyes; their baſtard courage will forſake them; and their own conſcience will ratify the juſt ſentence, which the Judge of all the earth will pronounce againſt them. If they are glorying in their crimes, they muſt die impenitent; and there is no place for repentance in the other world. *Seditions* are enumerated, by the Spirit of God, among the works of the fleſh*. *Traitors* are in the black liſt of thoſe ſinners, whoſe appearance in the world ſhall make the laſt days perilous †. And *murderers* ſhall infallibly have their part in that lake, which burneth with fire and brimſtone.

If in the great day of final reckoning, they ſhall be found to have been guilty of any of theſe crimes, and to have died without repentance, all the world ſhall not be able to hide them *from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, nor to ſcreen them from the wrath of the lamb.*

Permit me, therefore, to intreat, to beſeech, and even to conjure you, as you love the peace of ſociety, the ſafety of your families, or the preſervation of your own lives; as you deſire the proſperity of the church, or the glory of him who purchaſed her with his own blood; as you wiſh to eſcape the juſt judgement of God, and to enjoy the approbation of the great Maſter at his coming; as you value thoſe immortal ſouls, which if they be loſt the gain of a whole world will profit you nothing; that you ſuffer not yourſelves to be ſeduced into practices which muſt prove ruinous to all theſe. If you have already been ſeduced, count it your glory to break your fetters, and return to the way of duty; and, for the time to come, inſtead of hearkening to thoſe filthy *dreamers*, *who*

* Gal. v. 20.

† 2 Tim. iii. 4.